



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07604493 6

M E


# NEPHEW!

C S Montanye



Illustrated by



 Memorial  
1910



THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



Stuart Hay

# SOME NEPHEW!

*A Laugh Movie in Six Reels*

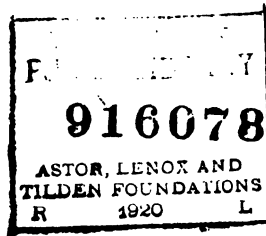
BY  
C. S. MONTANYE



NEW YORK  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

1920





COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY  
MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY

THE PLIMPTON PRESS  
NORWOOD MASS. U.S.A.

TO  
MY MOTHER  
CONSERVATIVELY SPEAKING  
THE MOST WONDERFUL  
PERSON ON EARTH

Gift of Pub. Weekly



## CONTENTS

REEL ONE.	INTRODUCING ROBIN . . . .	3
REEL TWO.	IT COULDN'T BE DONE! . . . .	39
REEL THREE.	IT COULD BE DONE! . . . .	69
REEL FOUR.	LITTLE GOLDIE GOLDBLOCKS . . .	103
REEL FIVE.	A TOUCH OF JAZZ . . . . .	139
REEL SIX.	THE DAY OF THE DOG . . . .	173



**REEL ONE**

***INTRODUCING ROBIN***



# SOME NEPHEW

## REEL ONE

### *INTRODUCING ROBIN*

WHEN I come in for breakfast the other mornin', I found friend wife in a state of agitation — also negligée. The kimono end of it was nothin' unusual, but to find her excited so early in the day was surprisin'.

"What's up, besides the shades?" I asks, droppin' into one of the real leather-seated chairs some salesman had bunked Gracie and me into buyin'. "What's on your mind besides your curl-papers?"

As I asks her the question, I get a peek at a letter lyin' beside her coffee-cup, and it don't take no Shylock Holmes to understan' pale-blue stationery, strugglin' for air under one of these here crests, had somethin' to do with the funny noises Gracie was makin'.



"Ed," she says, "what do you know of the nerve of Carrie? I never did know nobody like her!"

"Neither did I," I answers, wonderin' what it was all about.

Carrie, or to give her full name, Carrie Simpkins, is friend wife's sister. If the bird she married had left the *kin* offen his name, it would have fitted him better. As it is, he was a furniture-maker by profession and a crab by disposition. They had a boy what they named after me and called Robin for short. They lived out in Great City, Michigan, which was the only thing in their favor. Once a year they blew into town and collected Christmas presents, and that is the only time we see 'em.

"What's the matter with Carrie?" I goes on, as Gracie takes another fall out of the letter. "Is she tryin' to bust into Great City society again, or what?"

Gracie pulls one of these here boudoir-caps over one eye, which showed she was excited, and looks at me out of the other. The pose was so funny I had to laugh. It reminded me of the days when I didn't own the Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co., but was only a camera-man, and when Gracie was

doing rough-neck comedy for an insult of seventy-five per, custard pies included.

"It's not nothin' to laugh at," she says angrily. "And what is more, I guess you won't laugh when you hear what's happened."

"Well," I replies, as a brand-new servant girl stakes me to somethin' to eat, "I'll take your word for it, but shoot the piece."

She picks up the letter and shakes it in my face — whether for me to smell the perfumery or to register indignation I don't know.

"Carrie and Joe," she chirps, "is goin' to Grand Rapids to the Furniture Convention, and they is sendin' Robin to us to take care of for a couple o' months."

Oh, boy!

"Oh," I says, "they is sendin' Robin to us for a couple o' months."

I stops eatin' and begins to admire the Palisades.

"Well," Gracie snaps, "can't you do nothin' but stare out of the window? Haven't you anything to say?"

I left the view alone and pulled in my gaze.

"I got plenty to say," I snarls, "but if I started

it, the landlord would ask us to move. Shoot Carrie a telegram collect and say they is a case of prickly heat or somethin' in the flat next door. If they don't want to take their child with 'em, they should put him away in an orphan-asylum, and not send him to people what don't want him."

"Them is my sentiments," Gracie says, agreein' with me for the first time in six months, "but they is nothin' doin'."

"What do you mean, nothin' doin'?" I asks.

She draws a breath.

"They is nothin' doin', because already Carrie has sent Robin to us. Her letter says: 'Robin leaves for the East to-day with a capable nursemaid in charge and will arrive in New York, Thursday at four o'clock p.m.' This is Thursday. Now go ahead and laugh!"

To give the devil his dues, I have to admit Carrie is there with two things. One of them is brains and the other is nerve. Instead of writin' and askin' would we take care of Robin, she uses her head, knows the answer would be nix, no and nit, and sends him first and writes afterward. I'll tell the world, brains and nerve is some little com-

bination. When a guy has them, it ain't long before he's payin' an income tax what runs into four figures; and when a woman has them, like Carrie, there's nothin', includin' murder and wishin' a child off on relations, she can't get away with.

"We can make believe," I says hopefully, "we didn't get no letter off her."

Gracie exercises her head by shakin' it.

"No," she says, "that's foolish."

When I sees we are booked to entertain the child, I got sore and told her what I thought of both Carrie and Joe Simpkins. The new servant girl left the room and didn't come back until I was through. But Gracie only keeps noddin'.

"Well," I says, giving my watch the double-O, "since we is the fall guys for your relations, I guess they is nothin' to do except to lay in a couple of barrels of candy, and hire a detective to remind little Edward to keep his feet offen our Looey Quinine furniture."

Gracie sighs.

"If he busts anythin' here," she says, "I'll make Carrie pay three times what it costed us!"

"I can see where you're gonna make a lot of

money," I laughs, grabbin' a cigar. "I only hope you can collect. When it comes to gettin' money out of Joe, it's worse'n takin' off a union suit in August. Who's gonna blow down to the station and welcome Robin to our city?"

I knew the answer but had hopes.

"You," Gracie murmurs. "I shall not deprive you of the pleasure of meeting your only nephew."

"You can go if you want," I comes back at her. She yawns.

"I got a date this afternoon with Norma Sinclair, and I won't be home to dinner, either."

I let one of the guys who grafts offen me, known to the trade as a valet, ease me into my overcoat, and looks across the table.

"Don't forget to write once in a while," I says. "He won't be here more'n a month or two, you know."

I was twenty minutes late at the studio, and about as pleasant as a trunkful of snakes when I did arrive. Even the mornin' mail brung me no pleasure, and when that fails to cop out interest, it means they is somethin' goin' on upstairs what ain't

pleasant. The more I thought of what Carrie had wished off on us, the less I thought of it. Children is all right when broken to halter. From experience I knew this here Robin child was one of them kids what can't never see nothin' without wantin' it. He also had an idea tears was meant to use for the purpose of bribery, and if you did not come through with his requests, he could make more noise than election night. He was seven years old on his last birthday, and six of the seven had been passed eatin' candy. *That* was what had been sent to us, and I have failed to say anythin' about all the things he busted up, as I don't like to think of painful things.

Oh, boy!

Durin' the afternoon I got rid of a hunk of my grouch by firin' a couple of ham actors what came in to me for a raise, and by the time I went down to look over the last reel of a little comedy gem known as "Dirty Dave's Sweetheart," I was almost feelin' cheerful again. This cheerfulness was nipped in the bud, so as to speak, by the appearance of my valet, who blows in carryin' a note. He hands me it and beats it. The note said: "Do not forget for to go

and meet little Robin at four o'clock p.m. — Gracie."

There was nothin' to it but to let out a holler for the limousine. When it came, we busted a couple of records gettin' to the station and almost killed a couple of traffic cops on the way down. By the time we got to the Terminal, it was almost half-past four. And then I had to get a line on where Robin and the nurse was at. Which was some job! The bird what designed that station must have had a grudge against civilization. Believe me, it had more tricks to it than a magician. It was full of nothin' but what they calls levels. On the level, they was more levels in that station than they is in all the world, includin' Yonkers. They was the level on what trains from the south come in at, one for the east, one for the west and one for the north. All you had to do was to take your choice. If you happened to hit the wrong one, the right one was only a matter of about thirty-six miles distant.

By the time I pulled a Columbus and discovered where the Great City, Michigan, trains pulled in, I had lost six pounds but had gained a fine complexion. Then just as I was about to call it a

day, and had decided the only thing left was to buy the blue-prints of the joint, and have a plain-clothes man find the place I wanted, I hears the sound of weepin', and lookin' in the direction what it come from, I gets an eyeful of my nephew, little Edward Simpkins, sittin' on a bench beside a nice-lookin' dame of about twenty-six goin' on fifty. She was talkin' to him, and from the expression on her face, it was hard to figure out whether she wanted to kiss him or to shoot him.

"How do you do?" I says, goin' over and introducin' myself. "I believe you two is who I am lookin' for. Isn't this Edward alias Robin Simpkins from Great City, and nurse?"

The lady lets out a sigh of relief and nods her head, tellin' me I'm not a bad guesser, and that her name was Miss Murphy, which puts her in solid with me.

Hearin' our conversation, Child Edward forgets to weep and opens his eyes.

"Hello, Runcle Ed!" he pipes. "Kin I have some candy?"

He gets up and begins to perambulate around like a horse what has got blind staggers.



"What's happened to him?" I asks Miss Murphy. "Does he get 'em often, and what do you do when they come on?"

She shakes her head.

"It's a tantrum," she says. "He wants confectionery, but don't give him none. All he has did was to guzzle candy since we got on the train."

"Leave that to me," I answers. "If he can get it out of me, the Kaiser licked the world!"

Robin leaves off the merry-go-round stuff and come back to me.

"Ain't I gonna get no candy, Runcle Ed?" he whines. "Aintcha gonna get me none?"

I grabbed a hold of one of his hands, and Miss Murphy took the other. Between the two of us we got him upstairs and to the main level.

"What do you want with candy?" I says to him on the way. "A big guy like you don't want none of that stuff. Candy is for gals! What you want is one of these here baseball bats and an open lot where you can bust a few windows in."

It was probably due to surprise at not gettin' what he asked for that closed him up. At any rate, he didn't say nothin' more, and we reached

the limousine with only two snuffles and one sob. As soon as he gets a peek at the machine, Robin lets out a yell.

"I wanna ride with the driver! I wanna ride in front and steer!" he cries.

"They is as much difference between what you want and what you get," I tells him, "as they is between the St. Looey's and the White Sox! Now hop in and get that 'wanna' stuff out of your system."

When Robin gets wise to the fact he is foiled again, he lets out a scream and chucks himself down on the sidewalk. Miss Murphy grabs him up, and when I opens the door, she places him in the tonneau and mops away his tears. This all happens before I'm done givin' the wink to Horace, the chauffeur.

"I think, Mr. Connors," Miss Murphy says, when the car gets goin', "Robin has been spoiled by his parents."

"I get you there," I comes back at her. "You only think it, but I *know* it!"

Halfway home Robin turns off the tears and begins smilin'.

"Kin I have some candy tomorrow Runcle Ed?" he chirps.

It was time to use some of this here strategy stuff and camouflage, and so I says:

"If you will only lay offen that candy stuff long enough to get acquainted, I'll be much obliged. Tell Uncle Ed, if you is hungry for some *real food*, and forget they is such a place as Huyler's."

It appeared he was not interested in nothin' else, and while he thought over what I told him, I give him a slant. He wasn't a bad-lookin' boy, at that, which means he didn't take after neither Carrie nor Joe. He was dressed up about three years too young for his age, wearin' one of these here Busted Brown costumes, a low, flat Congressman's collar, a poet's necktie and a patented leather belt. The suit was blue except where they was a design of spots made by candy and tears mixed. For the rest, he wore short pants called knickerbockers, short socks and a pair of health shoes — called that, I suppose, on account of the person buyin' them, havin' to have a healthy pocketbook. His hair which was near gold, was cutted short with a bang, and he wore a round hat made of patented

leather, with a string that went under his chin. It should have kept his mouth closed but didn't, and therefore was of no use whatever except to keep the hat on.

By the time we reached Riverside Drive, and the apartment where Gracie and me is allowed to live, Child Edward was actin' almost civilized, and for this I offered up a silent prayer of thanks. I didn't want none of the rear admirals, disguised as bell-hops and elevator-boys, to think I was kidnarin' Robin or had just got through beatin' him up. We got him upstairs, and Miss Murphy took off his lid and turned him loose.

The first thing he did was to find a five-pound box of candy Gracie had left on the center table in the parlor!

Well, if I do say so myself, things did not turn out half as bad as what Gracie and me had imagined. Outside of bustin' a window with his top accidentally pushin' a dinin'-room chair through the door of the china-closet and wreckin' a dozen of Gracie's Chinese plates, puttin' glue in the soup when the cook's back was turned away, and gettin' sick at his stomach and keepin' us awake all night, we

wouldn't have never knowed he was aroun' us at all.

"Look here," I says to Gracie one mornin', after Miss Murphy had steered Robin out for a little air, "ain't that furniture convention nearly over? It looks like to me," I adds, "it ain't got nothin' on the winter, for duration. How about it?"

Gracie lays down a barrage of knife-taps on her egg, and wrinkles up her forehead like she used to when I was shootin' comedy fillum for the Enterprise people.

"Goodness knows," she says, "there is no one who wishes Carrie would send for Robin, more than me!"

I fails to agree with her.

"Yes they are," I snarls, " — *me!* Another couple of weeks like that that has just went, and I will be all ready to enter a nice refined laughin'-academy. I am afraid to get into bed at night on account of the stones he hid there last week, and every minute I'm home, I'm waitin' for the sound of a crash. Believe me, the day Robin grabs a rattler for Great City, I'm gonna celebrate, dry town or no dry town."

For some reason this seems to get Gracie's goat, and she flares up like the trick-powder photographers use when takin' pictures at night.

"You're gettin' away easy," she hollers. "You're down at the studio all day and don't have to chase him aroun' from room to room so he won't get drowned in the bathtub, or pull down any of the chandeliers, or turn on the gas by mistake! Yes," she sniffs, "pretty soft for you, I'll say!"

I busts out laughing.

"Yes? Well, whose child does he happen to be? I ain't got no married sister what goes to furniture conventions, or any other kind of conventions, and shoot their kid East so New Yorkers can suffer! Here I are, tryin' to run a fillum company by day and manage a lunatic asylum by night! I'll tell the world fair, I'm sufferin' for your sake only. If you was not my wife, I would not be here!"

Gracie finishes her egg and spears a strip of bacon.

"And what is more to the point," I goes on, "and what is more to the point, as the bird said when he sat on a tack, the Enterprise Comedy Fillum Company is beginnin' to feel my sleepless nights. If it goes into bankruptcy, don't blame it on me.

Blame it on Robin's stomach aches. I can't put my mind on my work after sittin' up and listenin' all the night long to Robin cryin' in seven different keys. Here we is at the studio, tryin' to dope out a new line of comedy fillums, with a kick in each one, and I am not able to put my mind on it. Yesterday, when Gavin reads me his scenarios, I didn't know if he was recitin' Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, or the third act of 'Hamlet.'"

This didn't appear to get very far under friend wife's skin, for all she did was to chuck up her head like a filly what has got enough of it in the stretch, and to toy with a bit of toast.

"All the same," she says, "and be that as it is, I have got a sick and nervous headache this mornin', and I can't stand that child around me. What is more, I won't! You will have to take the day off and ride him aroun' in the car, or take him to the zoo, or somethin'."

"If I taken him there," I answers, "the chances is he would not be let out to come back with me!" I looks across at her to see if she was pullin' any comedy, but seen she wasn't not, so I says: "All I have to do is to let my business go to ruin and

play nursemaid to a spoiled kid! What is you tryin' to do — see how mad you can get me — or what?"

"I mean it," Gracie says. "Not for love nor for money would I have Edward aroun' me to-day. I could not stand it! I feel like a wet washrag looks, and it's me for rest and quiet."

"What has happened to Miss Murphy?" I puts in. "Is she a cripple or somethin'? Why can't she take care of Robin outside in the street? What does she drag her dough down for?"

Gracie shakes her head wearily.

"No, that would not do. If anything should happen to Robin, and Carrie should learn he was out of our sight, she would no doubt have us arrested or somethin'. One of us has got to be with him, and *you're* the one."

There was no way out of it, and Gracie might have been deaf, for all the good it did me. I talked until I was blue in the face, and when I got through, she was still as unbendin' as granite. A half-hour later seen me and Robin, side by each, in the car, speedin' toward to the studio. I had bribed Miss Murphy to slip the boy into somethin' in the way



of a suit what wouldn't not show spots so plainly, and she had dolled him up in a corduroy suit what matched his hair. In one hand he had a stick of peppermint candy, and in the other a bran'-new two-buck bill he had picked up somewheres aroun' the house. Both seemed to act like soothin' syrup on him, for he was quiet as Philadelphia is at any time of the day or night.

We reached the studio without gettin' pinched, and bust a way through a couple of million possible Mary Pickfords, and got into my private office. Robin, durin' the proceedin', was as full of questions as a cop is full of information.

"What do all them people want, Runcle Ed?" he asks, and follows it up with a series of question marks. "Is this where you work at, Runcle Ed? Am I gonna get more candy, Runcle Ed, when I get down with this?"

When he got through with his monologue, I didn't know whether I was comin' or goin', and for the first time in my life I was wishin' I had been born deaf and dumb. After he had gave me a straight half-hour of questions, I punched the bell and told Miss Holliday, my private sec',

to send me Pete Morrison. Pete is the guy what handles the animal stuff for our fillums, and I figured out he was just the bird what could handle Robin to perfection.

"Pete," I says, when he shows up, "you might not believe it, but this here child is a relation of mine through marriage. Let me introduce you to him — Edward Simpkins, called Robin for short. And now grab a hold of his hand and lead him around the studio. Show him the sights, and if Nick is shootin' anythin' let Robin get a slant at it. Do anythin' you want, in fact, to keep him quiet. But under no circumstances let him get away from you! They is a lot of angles to Robin what don't show on the surface!"

Pete promises to do his best and blows out with my namesake, who seemed to take to him like cabbage does to corned beef, and I lets out a sigh of relief what could be heard in Shanghai.

The remainder of the mornin' was passed in peace and quiet. As the hours went by and nobody resigned, nor was there any sounds of things breakin', I began to forget all about Robin and gave my undivided attention to the business at hand. This

was nothin' more or less than young Gavin and his comedy scenarios what he had doped out for us. Gavin is a clever guy, and he has probably done more to advertise custard pies than anyone in the world or Russia. But the stuff he reads me, in my opinion, ain't just what I am lookin' for. It is clever an' all that, but it's old-fashioned. I didn't have to have the brains of a Napoleon to get wise to the fact the tossed pie, the comedy police and the flivver what falls apart just as the two leads is about to elope, is losing their edge. I don't mean to say I didn't realize them things wasn't still good for a laugh, but Mr. and Mrs. Motionplay Audience was always about two jumps ahead of the fillum. They knew for instance when we flashed a grocery store, a fat man and a crate of eggs, the last mentioned was booked for a flop into the eggs. They knew, also, when *Skinny Shubuckle* skinned up a ladder with a pail of paint in each hand, somebody was due to come along, trip over the ladder and get doused with the paint.

So that was why I was lookin' for somethin' new. It's the new idea what keeps things movin'. If you don't believe me, how about that new hat

the Missus is after you for? Don't that keep you movin' — to collect the dough to give to her for it?

"Gavin," I tells him, "your intentions is good, but the stuff dates back to the days when Sherman made a famous remark about war. In other words, like hash, your ideas is like somethin' what happened once before, and what is now up before the public in a new disguise. Now your dish is to dope out somethin' what ain't never not been done before. The Enterprise is payin' you to spring *original* ideas — get 'em!"

I goes on to tell him just what I mean, and when I gets through, he looks as wise as a pail full of boiled owls.

"I get you, Mr. Connors," he chirps, "but give me a little time to think it over."

"Take all the time you want," I answers, "provided it ain't more'n two or three days. I want to get some new fillums on the market in jig-time. See what you can do, and as I have said, give custard pies a rest and bring somethin' else to the fore, as they say in golf."

He promises, and beats it; and then I takes a slant at my watch and sees it is about three hours

after lunch-time. Then I remembers about bein' responsible about Robin, and the dope Gracie give me about not lettin' him outta my sight. I was grabbin' my collar and tie when the door opens, and in comes Pete and Child Edward, who is as peaceful as lower Broadway on Sunday.

"What has you done to him?" I asks Pete. "Put me wise, and I'll buy the prescription offen you, or hire it for the balance of two months."

Pete laughs, and pats Robin on top of his head.

"Oh, me and him is great pals, Mr. Connors," he says. "I wish you would bring him down here with you every mornin' and let him play aroun' the studio. He likes it, and it will do him good!"

I thought of Gracie's Chinese plates, and the busted window, and then I gets up and shakes Pete's hand.

• "Your salary is raised ten bucks more than it was," I hollers, "and you are officially promoted to the job of Bird-keeper!"

"Bird-keeper?"

"Yes," I says, "takin' care of a Robin! Will I bring him here? Will I? From to-day on, the child is gonna see more of this here place than he will of my house!"

The same night I tells Gracie the good news, and when she hears about Robin bein' booked to go to the studio with me every day, she looks suspicious; but when I assure her it is on the level, she says I has her permission, only I should be careful nothin' heavy falls on top of him, in the way of props. And she asks me, when I promise, if all the buttons is sewed on my shirts, or if they is anythin' she can do for me.

Well, for the entire followin' week I brung Robin to the studio in the mornin' and tooken him away at night. What the secret of it was that kept him quiet I did not know, but I understan' it was not no candy, for he slepted at night like a bill collector what has been chasin' cheats all day. At the beginnin' of the second week Gavin blows into my office one mornin' and says:

"Mr. Connors, this here new-idea stuff is all ready for you to pass on."

I looks at him.

"What do you mean waitin' for me to pass on?"

I asks. "I'm waitin' to see the scenarios."

He smiles all over his face.

"I can give you somethin' better'n that," he

says. "Come downstairs, and I can promise you a treat."

He got my curiosity worked up, and I puts on my collar and we go down together. The first thing I sees below is Robin surrounded on the north, east, south and west by all the gals of the company, eatin' a skyscraper of ice cream what was cruel to look at. And the gals was makin' a fuss over him with every spoonful.

"Aha!" I thinks. "So this is what is the answer to his good behavior! Ice cream, and skirts to tell him what a nice boy he is."

But I'm wrong.

"This way, Mr. Connors," Gavin says.

I follows him into the room where our fillums has their first showin', and find there, besides Pete, a couple of directors, Mike Hanley, our oldest camera-man, and some extras, who was laughin' like they had just listened to Sam Bernard.

"I have taken the liberty," Gavin explains, "of not waitin' to read you the scenarios, but of havin' Nick White, here, shoot them."

"Which," I answers, "puts you eligible to gettin' fired without warning."

He laughs.

"I'll risk that. Go ahead, Nick — tell the operator to spin off a reel of our new stuff."

The first thing what flashes on the little screen is a parlor set with all the gals playin' bridge, or poker, or old maid, or somethin'. Then the scene changes to the outside of the house and shows our star, Norma Delightful, all dolled up and evidently just arrivin'. With her, hangin' on to her hand, is her son; and the minute I sees the son, my eyes nearly falls out. You're right! *It's no one else than little Robin*, wearin' a smile what went from one ear to the other and then back again!

And right away I understan' what had kept the kid quiet!

I give you my word, I never laughs so hard since the day of the first custard pie, as I did at them scenes what Robin was in. And he was in most of 'em. They was a scream from beginnin' to end, and they would have shooked laughs outta a mummy. One minute he was takin' a showers bath with his clothes on; the next moment he was jugglin' crockery, climbin' up the chimney, tyin' the tails of two cats together, pullin' the insides of



a piano apart, and goin' through a line of tricks what would have busted up the worst grouch on earth. The best part of it all was the fact he was only actin' natural for the fillums, like he was at home, and not showin' off, which is the curse of most child actors. And all the time he never let offen wearin' that smile of his.

"What do you think of it?" Gavin asks, when the lights go up.

"It's immense!" I hollers. "It's a knock-out! Whoever thought of this is gonna notice a change in his salary!"

Pete, Gavin and White all look at each other and bust out laughin'.

"Then Robin," Pete says, "is the bird what cops it. He should get the credit! Let me explain. The first day what you brung him here, I loses him for a minute, and he wanders into the shower-bath in the set we had for Norma, and turns on the water. Mike Hanley gets a slant at him doin' it and trains the camera on him for a joke. Next day White sees the strip and sends for Gavin — "

"And after that," the scenario-writer butts in, "they was nothin' to it. But give the credit to the

kid. Most of them tricks is what he thought up himself."

"Taken altogether," I says, pullin' at my cigar, "it is some combination! Now here is what I want did. I want this fillum cut and arranged, and shot out to our distributors in record time. I want a big advertising campaign behind it and you can promise the agencies all the paper they want. You, Gavin, get busy on a new scenario as a follow-up; and you, White, use your head for somethin' else than a place to grow hair."

Hardly could I wait for Gracie to get an eyeful of the picture; and when she seen it, she laughed herself sick at Robin's comedy. It was called "Mamma's Beautiful Boy," and a couple o' records was bust gettin' it before the public. But finally it was out and aroun' the country, and the kind words of praise what poured in was more'n what a foreign committee gets when offered the freedom of a city. The public simply ate it up and yelled for more!

It would have been a crime the way Robin worked, only he was gettin' as much pleasure 'outta it as the movie-fans was themselves. And he took a

delight in thinkin' up kid-stunts what no director could have thought of in a couple of thousand years.

"How about this here furniture convention now?"

Gracie asks me one mornin' at breakfast.

I grins.

"What went before is not now good," I says.

"Can't you drop Carrie a line and tell her we don't want Robin taken away just yet?"

Gracie looks serious.

"I am wonderin'," she says slowly, "what Carrie is going to say when she learns of what Robin has been doin'."

It's a funny thing, but the minute you begin to talk about people, they show up. I never knew it to fail. I had hardly gotten the words outta my mouth before the bell rings, and in blows the very people we was discussin' — Carrie and friend husband.

"*Where is my child?*" Carrie yells, makin' a pass at me with her umbrella as she comes in. "Where is my child what you have ruined by makin' an actor out of!"

And then Joe has to stick in his two cents.

"If you wasn't not my brother-in-law," he says, "I'd take a fall outta you myself!"

"Don't let the brother-in-law part of it stop you!" I says, gettin' up.

"The only place I will fight you," he hollers "will be in the law courts of this country! You have made the name of Simpkins somethin' to laugh at!"

Gracie starts chucklin'.

"Is that so!" she says. "Well, I will tell you now and anybody else what wants to know it, that I found the name good for a laugh before Robin was ever thought of!"

After a lot more spiel along this line, our relatives got talked out, and beyond Carrie's tellin' us we had ruined all of her Great City society life, and Joe's remarkin' he would spare no money to get the best lawyers in the world to represent him, things was quiet. Then they remembered chairs was meant to sit on.

"What's the matter with both of you?" I says, watchin' Joe help himself to a handful of my cigars. "You ought to be glad Robin was kept outta trouble. If you is making a holler on account of

not gettin' yours, I'll state right now I has been puttin' the kid's wages into Liberty Bonds, and I'll bet you a thousand-dollar bill against a phony nickel, he is worth to-day almost as much as you!"

This goes over the top as far as Carrie is concerned, but I can see Joe is interested.

"What is money," Carrie says, "beside the health of my son? It's a wonder he is alive, from what he went through in that picture! And I can't not understan' how it is the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children is not after you! Why, when Joe and me seen that picture in Grand Rapids, we almost fell through the floor. And we was so upset we could hardly pack our bag to come here! And on the train I didn't do nothin' else but close my eyes and pray!"

"You oughta kept your eyes open," I says, "if Joe was sittin' next to you."

Gracie begins to laugh.

"If they is any prayin' to be did," she says, "I am the one what should do it! Not only did he bust in a window and the door of the china-closet, but he wrecked them dozen Chinese plates I have

had for so long and which couldn't not be replaced for love nor for money."

Carrie sticks her head up in the air.

"You must have forgot," she says, "it was Joe and I what gave you those plates when you was married. And if it comes to a show-down, I will give you the dollar ninety-eight cents what they costed me."

When she gets all through, it is Joe's turn.

"That is neither here nor is it there," he says. "The whole thing is, we has come here to get our child, and to tell you there will be an injunction against your company before very long! And if it takes my last penny, I'm goin' to make you pay for the injury you have done us, Ed Connors, through our child."

I understan' Joe is just crab enough to do what he says, and things look as blue as the sky in December, when the door opens, and in comes Miss Murphy with Robin.

"Oh, Runcle Ed!" he cries, payin' no attention to neither of the emigrants from Michigan. "I have new a trick to show Mr. Gavin to-morrow! Do you wanna see it?"

"Robin!" Carrie screams. "Don't you see your mother and your father?"

She grabs him up and goes all over him to see if there is anythin' busted, but he pulls away from her.

"Leave me alone!" he hollers. "Leave me be! I wanna show Runcle Ed my new trick!"

At this, Joe leans over and picks him up.

"Come, Robin," he says, "let Miss Murphy clean you up, for you is goin' back to Great City with Papa and Mamma."

A minute or two passes, and when this finally sinks into Robin's head and he gets wise to the fact his studio days is over, he busts lose from Joe, chucks himself down on the floor and lets go. Believe me, what that kid didn't do wasn't not worth talkin' about. He digs his face in the carpet, and the screams what come outta him has everybody in the apartment house callin' up the operator askin' where the murder was goin' on. Carrie and Joe yelled themselves hoarse tryin' to get a word in, but for all the good it done, they might have been in Europe tryin' to make themselves heard in Detroit. And when they get all through,

Stuart Hay







Robin crawls under the sofa, and nothin' but dynamite could 'a' moved him out.

"Don't cry so, beautiful boy!" Carrie says, crawlin' to the couch and stickin' her face under it. "Don't cry! Don't you want to go home with Papa and Mamma and see little Gwendolyn, across the street from us?"

The couch begins to shake.

"I don't wanna go home!" Robin bellows. "I wanna stay here and be a movie-picture!"

Well, he kept this up for ten minutes more, repeatin' the words until I knew them by heart. Then Carrie and Joe exchanges a look, and both sighs.

"I — ah — I — umm — I believe," Joe stammers, "that perhaps Robin is happy here after all, and we should not —"

Carrie cuts him short by noddin'.

"Yes," she agrees, "I think so, too!" She looks under the couch again. "Robin, darlin', come out and kiss Mamma. You don't have to go home if you don't want to."

The noise stopped like a factory when the whistle blows, and the couch wiggles. There was another

pause, and then out comes the smilin' face of Robin, covered with tears and dust, and he laughs:

"Runcle Ed," he chirps, "kin I show you that trick now?"

**REEL TWO**

***IT COULDN'T BE DONE!***



## REEL TWO

### *IT COULDN'T BE DONE!*

"GRACIE," I says to friend wife, "I have now got some news for you which is about fifty-fifty good and bad. In other words, Nick White — same bein' in charge of the shootin' of Robin's latest fillum — has said the last two reels of it has got to be shot down in that Palm Beach place!"

Gracie thinks it over for a coupla minutes, and then begins to laugh like I had told her the one about the chorus girl and the mosquito.

"Ed, this is really a joke, and I can see where both Carrie and Joe figure to cut an awful piece of graft. If you say Palm Beach to them, they will stick closer to you than a one-armed beggar lookin' for carfare."

It was my turn to laugh.

"Yeh? Well they won't do no such thing! I have got somethin' up my sleeve besides my arm, and if Joe wants to grab an angle on where we is

bound, he is gonna hear the locations are up around the North Pole, where it is so cold that it is about ninety degrees in the shade! Just because Carrie is your sister is no reason I and you should cart them down South, givin' them the best of everythin' without the cost of a nickel to them. Simply havin' them layin' around this flat, Joe findin' my cigars no matter where I hides them, is bad enough. Not for love nor for money is they gonna graft a free trip off of me! You can tie that!"

Friend wife sighs.

"You is right, of course, Ed," she says, "and it is pretty foxy of you to make out we is goin' some place where we is not. But — " she comes through with another sigh — "you know Joe. Leave it to him to find out all about it. He is worser than a mind-reader when he gets goin'!"

I gets up and strolls across the new Chink rug I give Gracie on her most recent birthday, and which cost me practically nothin' — a mere three thousand bucks. After I treated myself to a view of the Palisades, I goes back to Gracie, who is knittin' somethin' that looks like a hammock.

"Listen," I tells her. "Joe will have to be

better'n any mind-reader to get the dope on this. And here is why: They is only three people in all the world, includin' Flatbush, what knows about it: Ted Gavin, Nick White, and *you*. I don't count myself in, as accordin' to your relatives and everybody else I'm only a dummy. Ted and Nick are both so quiet when it comes to handin' out information that they make Lynnhavens green with jealousy. Let him try to find out and see where he comes out!"

"When do we leave?" Gracie asks.

"Sometime aroun' the end of the month. Nick has shot a coupla reels already; we is only waitin' now for Jerry Davis to wire us from Florida that he is grabbed good locations."

Friend wife don't say nothin' for at least five minutes, the same bein' almost a world record for her.

"Ed," she chirps, after a while, "I hope you win out on this, but as you sometimes say on Election night — I doubt it!"

I busts out laughin'.

"I think I has done my bit toward your relatives. Here I is payin' Joe and Carrie's child the small



sum of five hundred dollars per each week as an actor for my fillums, and both he and Carrie is gettin' their board and rent free. It don't take no person with second sights, to see why I get sore every time I think of them spongin' off of us, and then knowin' they will try and trail along down to the South. Believe me, before they get away with this, I will have growed a beard like what was wore by old Rip Van Wrinkle!" I stops to laugh again. "Anyway, as I say before, they is positively no chance for the cat to get outta the bag!"

I had hardly got the words from my mouth, when the door busts open, and into the room comes Joe Simpkins hisself.

"Ed," he hollers, "tell me what is all this I hear about you and Robin goin' to Palm Beach, Florida!"

Gracie lets out a yell and hides her face in the pillows of the sofa, while I leans over to pick up the cigar which had leaped outta my mouth.

"What do you mean — Palm Beach?" I snarls. "Who told you anythin' about it?"

"Ted Gavin," he says. "I and him was down at Coogan's for a little brew, and after Ted had

gave a good home to six glasses of near beer, he begun to talk about this here trip we is goin' on!"

I has all I can do to keep myself from knockin' him, while Gracie keeps on makin' funny noises in the sofa-pillows.

"Listen," I says, calm as a bird when the doctor tells him it's twins. "Talk to me all you want, but leave aside this here 'we' stuff! I'm sorry you has found out about the trip to the South — not that it will do you no good; but I'm glad I know what six glasses of beer, with alcohol next to nothin', can do to Gavin. I suppose had he drunken an imitation cocktail, he would have told you the profits I dragged down last year!"

"You is gettin' away from the subject," Joe answers. "The question is — when do we leave? I want to slip in an order to your tailor for a dozen pairs of these here white pants."

Gracie, comin' outta the cushions for air, goes off again, while Joe grabs a slice of bacon off of the table, which I had forgot.

"Get this now," I tells Joe, still fightin' to keep my temper under control, and to keep from doin' somethin' I might regret. "You might as well

know this here now: Gracie, Robin, and me is going; you and Carrie *ain't* — unless you dig up the dough, and that lets you out."

Joe pays absolutely no attention to my words and begins to whistle a song.

"Palm Beach," he stops to say, "is the one place I long to see. They tell me it is somethin' on the order of Great City."

Gracie goes off in another fit while I help myself to a chair. Had it not been for his child, I would have taken a shot at him right then and there. It was only that what stayed my hand.

Just at that minute in breezes Carrie.

"Gracie," she chirps, "haven't you got a book what shows the latest styles that is bein' worn this winter down at Palm Beach?"

"Maybe Ed knows where they is one layin' aroun'," Gracie laughs, slippin' me a wink.

Carrie comes over to me, and I slides behind Joe.

"Ed!" she says, in a voice as soft as feathers, "How many people is goin' South with you, outside of them from the studio and little Edward?"

"Two," I yells. "Me and Gracie!"

Carrie draws herself up to her full height, which is five feet nothin'.

"If such be the case," she smiles, "I cannot allow Robin outta my sight. Goodness, I should be worried to death about him."

"You wasn't worried," I answers, "when you stuck him and the nurse on a rattler out in Great City with directions they should be flung off in New York."

"No," she snaps, "I wasn't worried then, because I knew they was no snakes or nothin' where he was goin'."

"Lay off that stuff!" I says. "The biggest snake in the world is right here now!"

Gracie, decidin' it is time to horn in on the conversation, gets up off of the sofa and comes aroun'.

"Have a heart, Carrie!" she begs. "What do you think my husband is, anyhow, — the president of the subtreasury or somethin'? Or what? I suppose you think they is sellin' trips to Palm Beach for a dollar ninety-eight! Personally, also, I think Ed has gave you both enough charity to last about thirty-five years!"

"Yes," I yells, "the only thing I have not done

for the pair of you is to buy Joe's furniture store off of him!"

Carrie looks at Joe. He looks at the ceilin'.

"We won't argue," she says, fillin' her voice with this dignity thing. "Either we go, or Robin *don't*"

I turns my back on her just as Robin bounces in on the arm of Miss Murphy.

"Runcle Ed," my nephew hollers, "we was up to Bronnix Park, and we seen ephalents, and mon-keys what looked like Pop, an' everythin'."

He comes over to me for a kiss, payin' no attention to his old man and Carrie. She makes a grab for him, but he slips under the sofa and comes out with a pair of gum-drops with dust on 'em.

"Gimme that candy!" Joe hollers.

Instead of doin' it, little Edward ducks back under the sofa. While his parents drop down and begin to crawl in after him, I grabs my hat and beats it.

Outside in the hall I encounters Roger, my valet.

"Roger," I says, as he salutes me, "I wanna give you somethin'."

"Yes sir — thank you, sir," he answers, stickin' out his hand.

"It ain't money," I says, "it's advice! You're a single man. If you ever gets married, tumble for a dame what ain't got a sister married to a bird's-eye-maple fiend!"

Roger treats himself to a smile and bows, as the elevator comes up.

"Yes, sir — thank you, sir," he says.

When I gets down to the studio I was feelin' about as happy as a raincoat-manufacturer durin' a dry-spell. I busts into my private office, wavin a coupla million job-hounds away; ready to take a fall outta anybody from Joe to Jack Dempsey.

No sooner I got seated at my desk, than in marches Miss Holliday.

"Good morning," she says, tossing a coupla smiles over to me. "I hear you is goin' to Florida."

I accidentally throws my collar and tie into the trash-basket and lets out a yell.

"Lay off of that stuff! The first one that says anythin' more about Palm Beach aroun' here can see the cashier and beat it! That goes!"

Miss Holliday keeps right on smilin'.

"Oh, pardon me," she murmurs. "I didn't know that was a forbidden subject with you."

"It is about as forbidden as booze," I explains, beginnin' to roll up my sleeves. "You is forgave. Now just slip away and send Ted Gavin in to me, dead or alive!"

"I'll do just that!" she chirps, blowing out.

Well, in about ten minutes or so, the door opens again, and in totters Ted Gavin, shakin' like a line full of wash on a windy day.

"Boss," he moans, "please don't be hard on me — I didn't wanna give away no secrets, but drink turned my mind!"

I laughs coldly.

"If you call imitation beer drink," I says, "I suppose bay rum would go to your head. How's that for a joke? But," I snarls, "all foolin' to one side, you has got me into a peach of a fix, and its up to you to get me outta it!"

He goes to the window and gives the view the double-O. Then he comes over to my desk and almost lays on it.

"Boss," he whines, "I oughta get canned, I know, but have a little pity. Every one of us

has human failin's. Redeye is my particular curse."

"Redeye," I tells him, "will get you a black eye if you spill any more of this here information stuff. No, Gavin, I'm not gonna can you — I'm gonna do worse than that. I'm gonna make you write all over them last two reels. Instead of Palm Beach, you're gonna make the sets somewhere else. Get that?"

Fear and surprise, also misery, is wrote all over his map, and he lets out a groan that sounded like a tire goin' bad.

"Anythin' but that!" he pleads. "Why, you is ruinin' my masterpiece! Them Florida sets are knockouts!"

"Yeah!" I cries. "Knockouts is right — knock them out!"

He begs for mercy and digs up a tear or two, but I'm hard as the Huns was in Belgium, and when he sees they is nothin' doin', he pulls hisself together and creeps to the door.

"I'll do it," he moans. "But it will bust my heart!"

"If you don't do it," I answers, "it will bust



your contract! Now be on your way and fix them new scenes up different. When they is complete, I will cast my now — ah — eagle eye across them. Make it snappy, kid. Nick will wanna begin shootin' around the end of the month."

His answer is nothin', and he slunk away like a prize-fighter what has got the worst of it. I laughs as he goes. Gavin thinks as much of his scenarios as a chorus girl does of her looks, and to have to dope them all over again affects him worser than a pet corn.

Once he is gone, I sends for Nick. When he comes in, I waves him into a chair and breaks the news gently.

"Nick," I begins, "no more than five minutes ago, more or less, I told Ted Gavin to change the locations for the last two reels of Robin's new picture. I don't know where he is goin' to lay them, but they *won't* be in Florida or near it! So far, so good — as the bird says when he's climbin' Pike's Peak! Here's the idea: no matter where the scenes is laid, I want you to make out we is still due to travel down to the land of alligators, thin yellow suits, and rollin' chairs. Understan'? If my

brother-in-law, or his wife, or anyone asks you where we is goin' — say Palm Beach and stick to it like mad. I can trust you, can't I?"

He nods.

"From a nickel to a million! It's too bad," he sighs, "we gotta give up the trip, but of course you is the boss, and not me!"

I takes a slant at my clock and touches a button for Miss Holliday.

"Listen," I tells her when she appears, "I and Nick is goin' downstairs to take a look at what is already finished of my little nephew's fillum. If Robin and his nurse, Miss Murphy, comes here durin' my absence, shoot them down, and don't let them lay aroun' this office."

She promises. Then she slips Nick a wink what she thinks I don't oversee, and we goes out. Downstairs in the studio they is great confusion, owin' to some rats used in Robin's picture escapin' and scarin' the gals stiff. Pete is roundin' them up one by one, as we goes in and gets a flash of our star, Miss Norma Delightful, settin' on top of a step-ladder and makin' out she is posin' for one of these here hosiery ads.

"Ed," she screams, "my contract don't call for gettin' scared to pieces by wild rats! If you don't furnish me with protection, I'll go over to the Sunbeams!"

Nick begins laughin' at this, while Pete chases the last rat into a burlap bag and marches out, grinnin'.

"It is funny, Norma," Nick says, "how, after foolin' with wild lions and the like, you should be afraid of a few harmless rodents whose teeth are all wore out. I am ashamed of you. I thought you were as hard as fifteen cents' worth of nails!"

Norma pulls down her skirt and comes back to earth.

"I wasn't chased up there by rodents," she says, comin' down off of the ladder. "I was chased up by *rats!*"

Nick laughs like she was pullin' a new joke or somethin', and then the three of us busts into the room where the first showin' of our fillums is made at.

"The boss is down here!" Nick bawls to Steve Clancy, our operator. "Give us all of 'The Heir

to the Throne' you has got, and don't loose no time doin' it!"

Well, it didn't take no wizard to understan' 'The Heir to the Throne' is a whale of a picture from the first scene. In it Child Edward is at his best, which is about the same as sayin' the Giants is back to form; Norma looks as good as a million dollars; and Larry Keegan, our best comedian, is as funny as a souse on ice-skates. Lightin' and direction couldn't be beat, and the sets in themselves is enough to make all our imitators tear out their hair by the handfuls.

The story what Gavin doped out is laid in one of these here toy kingdoms in the Balkans Mountains. It is called Bumsylvania. Keegan is cast as the king of the place. Norma is the queen, and Robin is their child, bein' known as *Prince Augustus*. In the first reel my little namesake shows off some of his best tricks, such as swipin' the king's crown and using it for a hoop, fallin' into the royal moat — a ditch full of water — and foolin' aroun' with the royal animals.

Also they is some plot, which concerns a band of revolutionists what resemble the Bolsheviki, bein'

in need of soap, water and razors. They is plannin' to bust into the Palace, and kick out the *King* and *Queen* and little *Gus*. Among other things they smuggles in some bombs which Robin finds, and has a great time bowlin' with. They is also a bunch of comedy that's a riot.

In reel the second we sees how the revolution gets goin'. Robin, Larry and Norma gets dispossessed and has to leave in a hurry. Just like the first reel, Robin again cuts a comedy melon and has some situations which would have shooked laughs outta a mummy. The fade-out at the end of the fillum shows them all slippin' aboard a boat bound for the land of the free and the home of the shave.

"Now," says Nick, when the lights come up again, "the scenario goes on to tell how the king gets himself a job as a cook in one of them swell hotels at Palm Beach. Norma, here, signs up as a waitress — what on accounta her looks gives divorce-lawyers plenty of work; and Robin naturally continues to be the particular pest of the place. If you think these here scenes was howls, wait till you see what I does to the rest of the fillum.

On the level, Ed, I'll bet my homestead in Yonkers against a defective nickel that Charlie Chaplin himself will be bitin' off his nails when he sees what Robin has in the line of laughs. Not only this, but if the exhibitors don't mob the exchanges for the picture, you needn't pay me a cent's worth of salary! That is what *I* thinks of it!"

"Yes," chimes in Norma, "the fillum is certainly a wonder. Did you notice how well I registered in the close-ups?"

"They is only a few little things to clean up," Nick horns in, "before I will be ready for the hotel-stuff."

For the next week I'm as busy, both at the flat and the office, as a one-man barber shop on a Saturday night. Nick has cleared up all the details and has only one thousand feet to shoot before bein' ready for the hotel stuff. Meanwhile, Ted Gavin has turned inside out the last two reels and has added new scenes, makin' Rockefeller richer by his use of the midnight oil. He has added a brand-new ending, the same takin' place now at a place known as Shore Beach, the same bein' located in the wilds of Long Island. I recalls Jerry Davis from

a life of ease in Florida, and when he gets back, shoots him down to Shore Beach and tells him what to do. He goes there, shiverin' and cursin' the weather, and comes back in a coupla days with the news he has hired the Hotel Breakers outright, at a price which almost breaks me.

"Ed," Jerry says, on the minute of his return, "you're, now, takin' a terrible chance of gettin' damage-suits against you, from the bunch, takin' them down to that place. It is so cold there, a fur coat feels like you has only got on your Bevo D's. Imagine, with the script callin' for 'light summer clothin'', how the gang will feel all dolled up in tissue-paper suits, with the temperature next to nothin'." He stops and then adds: "Now, if you had only gone down to Palm Beach —"

"Yeah!" I hisses. "And if I had only gone down to Africa, we wouldn't have needed no clothes at all, and I would have saved money!"

One mornin' durin' the last week of the month, Carrie and Joe breaks into breakfast, where I and Gracie is reducin' the egg-supply, and watchin' snow fall outside, arm in arm.

"Where is the heir to the throne?" I asks, after

we tosses aroun' this "Good mornin'" thing. "How comes it Robin ain't out of the hay yet?"

"Oh, Miss Murphy and our darlin' child has been up long hours ago," Carrie says, tyin' a napkin under her double chin. "They is down on Riverside Drive for a walk. The air always gives the little dear a good appetite."

"If such be the case," I says, "it is a good thing for Belgium and France that Joe don't take a walk before breakfast, too."

"What do you mean by a crack like that?" my brother-in-law snarls.

"Nothin'," I answers with a grin. "Only if you got any more appetite than you now has, they wouldn't be no food left to send to Europe."

"For goodness sakes," says Carrie, "can't you men never stop bitin' at each other?"

Joe tries to look like he wasn't guilty of nothin' at all.

"Oh, I'm used to it," he says in a sad voice. "I suppose when I got a rich brother-in-law what is takin' us to Florida and puttin' us up in the best hotels, I gotta stand for somethin'."



*Oh, boy!*

"Sure," I replies, steppin' on Gracie's foot under the table. "When a guy has a brother-in-law what is a sucker, he must stand for everythin', no matter even if he gets a bust in the eye or what! Ain't I right, hey, Joe?"

"Gracie," says Carrie, turnin' both her head and the conversation at the one and the same time, "you should ought to see them swell pongee and silk dresses what Lady Jordan Almonde has made up for me. She says that in them I will be the talk of the Beach!"

"In them or out of them," I butts in, "you would be the talk of the Beach!"

This goes over the fence for a three-bagger as far as Carrie is concerned; and at the same moment Gracie, not bein' able to stand it any longer, gets up coughin' and stuffin' her napkin in her mouth, and makes out she has to go and see the chef.

"Has you bought our tickets yet?" Joe asks suddenly. "If so, I hope you got *me* a lower berth and not an upper one, in which I couldn't sleep, on accounta the heat."

If Gracie had been in the room, I would have

busted out, but as it was I takes a deep breath and nods my head.

"The tickets and everythin' else is in the safe down at the studio," I lies. "Don't worry about nothin', Joe, nor loose any sleep. Everythin' is bein' took good care of. I am spreadin' myself on this treat, so you both should have somethin' to look back upon in the after years what are comin'!"

Joe looks as happy at this as a janitor after swipin' the tenants' milk. He knows more about the word *graft* than the guy what wrote it, and if he thinks he is gettin' away with somethin', it pleases him better'n an introduction to Mary Pickford.

Gracie comes back, and fearin' to be in the same room with her, with Joe ready to pull a boner at any moment, I slips out and tells Roger to telephone the garage and have the limousine sent aroun'. Then while waitin' its arrival, I goes downstairs and gives the scenery the once-over, hopin' to catch a glimpse of my child star and his nurse. They is nothin' of them in sight, however, and so I has the pleasure of ridin' down to the studio minus my little nephew's feet all over me.

No sooner does I get into my private office than Pete blows in, carryin' a handful of tickets.

"Boss," he says, "you is gonna right now be set back a few bucks. I have in my hand tickets for the Fillum Exhibitors' Ball, which same is bein' gave a week from to-night. They is a dollar a throw. Will ten be enough?"

"Here," I says, partin' company with a new two-bone bill, "never mind the humor, gimme two."

He slips them to me and goes out whistlin', just as Nick comes in.

"Ed," he says, while I put the tickets away in my card-case, "everythin' now is ready for us all to go to Shore Beach. Can we leave to-morrow?"

"Yes," I says, "and the sooner the better. You, Norma, Keegan and the rest of the bunch, can go by automobile. I, Robin, friend wife and the nurse-girl will be democratic and let the railroad make a little money off of us."

No sooner he leaves, I grab the telephone and gets Gracie on the other end of the wires.

"Listen," I tells her, when she knows it is I and not the people what live under our flat, callin' up

to complain about Child Edward's noise. "We is all set to leave to-morrow. So pack our grips and leave enough room in mine for my razor. By the way, dearie, has Robin left for the studio yet, and where is Joe and Carrie at?"

"Robin has already left," Gracie answers, "and Carrie and Joe has gone down to your tailor to see about them white pants he's ordered. Ed," she continues, with a change in her voice, "I know the pair of them is a coupla bandits, but all the same Carrie is my own sister, and it's a dirty trick to kid them along, and then ditch them at the last minute."

She stops, and I hears her coughin'.

"Go ahead," I snarls, "and let me hear the rest of the song. What about it?"

I hears somethin' like a sigh comin' a thousand miles.

"I think," she says, "that under the circumstances you had better loosen up and buy the both of them each a one-way ticket. Then they will never have no chance to say you did them dirt, nor will they have anythin' against you. You know what a hound Joe is. If you should do

it, he might take Robin away from your company just for spite. Anyhow, play safe, Ed, and do this. I ask you, isn't it a good plan, don't you think?"

"I knew they was some kind of a joker in it," I retorts. "I can't never try to put anythin' over for myself without somebody crabbin' the act. But you is my wife, Gracie, and I suppose I will have to do what you say. But please don't never ask nothin' like it again."

She promises and rings off. I tells Miss Holli-day to get on her hat and coat, and when she does the same I slips her some dough, and tells her to beat it to a railroad ticket-office, and to buy two one-way tickets for Palm Beach.

The followin' mornin' being the day of our departure, they is more excitement in our flat than they ever was in the whole of Europe. Joe and Carrie have a lot of fun lockin' their trunks and bags every five minutes, and then openin' them the next to put in somethin' they has forgot. By the time the limousine is announced as bein' at the door, we is all nearly ravin' maniacs. Then, to make it more pleasant, Roger blows in to say Robin is stuck under the ice-box. At this we all has to

rush into the kitchen, Carrie screamin' worse than if the house has caught afire. Here we sees nothin' in sight except the Jap chef tryin' to drag Robin out from under by the heels.

"Leave my child be, you yellow peril!" Carrie yells, knockin' him to one side. "How dare you lay the weight of your fingers on my precious!"

With Joe's assistance she drags Robin out. The child is all covered up with dirt and dust, and yellin' like an Indian. He rubs some black dirt from his eyes and sees me.

"Runcle Ed," he howls, "make 'em leave me alone! I wasn't doin' nothin'! I was only chasin' a crockroach, and now he has gotta away on me!"

Miss Murphy removes him from our presence to throw him into some clean clothes, and we all returns to the livin'-room, where Joe remembers he has forgot his tooth-brush. At exactly the same moment Carrie comes to life and says she has forgot her curlin'-iron, which is on the sill in the bath-room.

Finally they is nothin' left in the flat except the closets, and we all piles in the elevators and goes down, loadin' up the car like it was a movin' van,

and until they was more junk in it than they ever was in the whole of the German navy. Then, while we creeps in, and sets down to await for Robin, just so we won't get bored nor nothin', Joe and Carrie starts a fight about which one shall sit on the back seat.

They is still fightin' about it, and bickerin' back and forth, when we gets to the railroad station and climbs out. Without no fatalities except Robin fallin' down, we finds out where the Florida trains leave from, and it is here I pulls the ace I has so long buried.

"Joe and Carrie," I says to them both, "as we all stands in the shade of a car what is named after a cigar, bein' called 'Seminole,' right here and now I'm gonna give you both the surprise of your lives. You has been so insistent about goin' to Palm Beach, and takin' it for granted we all is goin' too, you has both never stopped to ask us about the trip to the South and so forth. However, we're not goin', and never had no idea of it. I, Gracie, Robin, Miss Murphy and the studio gang is goin' to a dump down on Long Island known as Shore Beach, where we is gonna finish up 'The Heir to

the Throne.' It is a N. G. place, bein' so cold that stuff freezes while cookin' on the stove. Now actin' on Gracie's advice, I has bought you both a ticket for Palm Beach. It won't cost you a nickel to go there. Here is the tickets. Use them or leave them; come with us or go to the south — only hurry up and make up your minds."

Both Carrie's face and Joe's face, as I finish speakin', is as blank as a piece of note paper. There is a silence, and then Joe's eyes begins to glitter, and he grabs the tickets I has took out of my card-case, outta my hand.

"I couldn't expect nothin' different from you, Ed," he snarls, "on accounta your Irish blood. But I and Carrie will fool you both. *We will go!* Come on, dear," he says to his wife. "let us each get a kiss off Robin, and then beat it away from here."

They do this just as whistles begin blowin' and a bird with a watch in his hand yells: "All aboard!"

Then the train begins to pull out, and the last we see is Joe lettin' Carrie struggle to open the window next to their seat.

Thirty minutes later, Gracie, I, Robin and Miss



Murphy is all settin' on a fast-movin' express train in a parlor-car, friend wife and me admirin' the view, and my child star a cake of chocolate I buys for him off a guy what come aroun' with a basket.

Everythin' continues to be as pleasant as a July fishin'-trip until the bird what collects the tickets comes aroun'. Robin, after gettin' a slant at the puncher the guy carries, wants it for his own, and it is only by threats and bribery Gracie can make him change his mind. Then I pulls out my card-case, opens it, and seein' what is in it, before my eyes, lets out a yell and almost falls outta my seat.

"For heaven's sake, Ed," Gracie cries, "has you gone ravin' crazy or what? What is the matter with you?"

I pulls myself together.

"Nothin'," I hollers, still shakin', "only I bought two tickets off of Pete for the Fillum Exhibitors' Ball, the other day, and by mistake I have just now give them to Joe instead of the Florida railroad train tickets you made me buy!"

**REEL THREE**

***IT COULD BE DONE!***



## REEL THREE

### *IT COULD BE DONE!*

"I THINK," says Joe, drinkin' the balance of his third cup of coffee, and throwin' a spoon into his fifth egg, "I will blow into your studio a little later in the day, Ed, and see how things is comin' along."

"Between what you think and what you do," I says, "is a difference twice as wide as the well known Atlantic Ocean. Visitors is not allowed at the studio, and, as I don't see you comin' across with no board aroun' here, I guess you come under that headin'. How about it?"

Joe ignores the crack and looks wise.

"Oh, is that so?" he snarls, slippin' a lot of this here dignity thing into his voice. "I guess you're forgettin' whose son is makin' you independently wealthy. How about *that*?"

Friend wife horns into the conversation before I can come back at him.

"For goodness sake!" she hollers, "Won't you never get wise that peace has been signed and the war is long since over!"

Next it is Carrie's turn to be heard.

"Yeh," she sniffs, "it's positively disgustin' the way Ed is always pickin' onto Joe. To hear him talk you might get the idea my Robin was *his* son."

"If he was," I yells, "I would teach him some manners! And further more," I continues, "whilst we is conversin' together, you might as well know that if you don't like the way I'm runnin' things, all the both of you has to do is to grab a train and beat it home to that dear Great City! They is a rattler leavin' at four o'clock — I know because I has a time table in my pocket, what I study now and then, hopefully."

Joe gives Carrie a look — about the only thing he ever gives away — and laughs coldly.

"Tryin' to get rid of us, hey?" he says. "Well, that bluff might go in poker but not with me! If you ever thought we was really goin' for good, you'd hire every dick in town to keep us from gettin' to the station."

"Would I?" I retorts. "Guess again! I wouldn't not do nothin' of the kind, and if you wanna know why, because Robin wouldn't go with you. Look at the time before when you tried to pry him away. Not a chance! He likes me better'n a moth does a hunk of fur and a dark closet!"

"Listen to Ed Connors!" Carrie screams. "You'd think he had a mortgage on Robin, or somethin', the way he raves!"

Gracie smiles a little.

"Sure," she agrees, "but remember Carrie who first pulled a Columbus and discovered Robin had talents. On accounta this he don't feel he wants no outsiders buttin' in at the studio durin' workin' hours."

I can see Joe is ready to pull some more bunk, but just then the dinin' room door opens, and in comes Roger.

"Your limousine is at the door, sir. Master Robin and Miss Murphy are already down, sir."

"Tell 'em I'll be right along," I says, givin' my watch a tumble.

Rogers bows and beats it, and I slips into my coat.

Whilst doin' the same, Joe begins laughin' like someone had cracked a joke.

"C'mon, foolish," I says, reachin' for my lid, "what's the humor? If it makes you laugh it must be good."

He lights a cigar and strolls to the window.

"I was just thinkin'," he says in a voice soft as silk, "about a little letter what I got last night off the Sunbeam Picture Co."

Carrie gives him a sharp look, and he stops laughin' like he had suddenly lost a nickle.

"Can't you never keep nothin' to yourself, you fathead?" she barks.

"That's all he does —" I laughs, "— keep things!" I splashes a kiss on Gracie and breaks for the door where I stops. "The Sunbeams," I says, lookin' back at Joe, "has never paid a dividend yet. Not only this, but they have liabilities resemblin' the national debt of Turkey, and them what work for the company never know if they is gonna get their salary or not!"

With this I beats it downstairs and gets in the car where Robin is layin,' his feet half out of the window.

The minute he sees me he begins weepin'.

"Runcle Ed," he sobs, "I got a pain from eatin' too many biscuits!"

I tells the chauffeur to be on his way, gets in, and removes the feet of the child from obstructin' the view.

"I got a pain, too, Robin," I says, "but your old man gave it to me and not no biscuits!"

Bein' a child, this slips out into deep center so far as he is concerned, and he begins diggin' out his eyes with his fists, and spillin' more tears than an April shower.

"I got a pain!" he yells, "I got a pain! I got a or'ful pain!"

He keeps up the song until I don't know if I'm comin' or goin'.

"Aw, have a heart, Robin," I begs, after he keeps whinnin' for about ten minutes. "If you got a pain use some of this here Christmas Science and forget it. Look it — if you keep on cryin' you will have your eyes so red that they will show in the picture, and then all the people in this country and Brooklyn, will be laughin' at you and sayin' 'Look it Robin! The little stiff is a big cry baby!'"



This got over and he turns off the water and begins smilin'.

"I am not no cry baby is I, Runcle Ed?" he chirps. Then before I can answer he continues, "I wanna piece of candy — I wanna glass of ginger-ale!"

All this time I was tryin' to grab an angle on what brother-in-law Joe had meant by sayin' he got a letter offen the Sunbeam Picture Company, but what with Robin's noise, it was about as much use to dope it out as it would be to try and cross the Hudson on roller skates.

"Listen Robin," I begs, "if you don't want Runcle Ed to turn you over his knee, forget that you know what candy is! And as for the other stuff you want, just remember you is a movie picture actor and not one of these here soft drink fiends! C'mon now, sit up nice and be a good boy, and when we get home to-night I'll stake you to some of that molasses candy I have in the side-board."

"You can't!" he hollers, "I ate it all last night!"

We reaches the studio just as I'm decidin' to give him a lickin', and this saved him.

"Do you think you will need the car any more?" says the chauffeur, openin' the door to let us out.

"Yes," I answers, pryin' Robin away from the upholstery, "don't give it away or nothin'."

He grins at this, touches his cap and helps Miss Murphy climb through a spare tire on the front seat, the same bein' done with no more fatalities than a busted heel. I and Robin and her goes into the studio. I leaves them there and breezes up to my office. Here Miss Holliday is waitin', and the second I gets in she looks at the clock accusingly.

"You're fifteen minutes late," she chirps.

I gets a look at a pile of mail on my desk the Alps has nothin' whatsoever on for height, and flops into a chair.

"Listen," I begs her, "if you ever intend to get married — which is likely, as gals do get married now and then — take a tip from me and don't pull none of that 'you're fifteen minutes late' stuff around your husband."

She looks as surprised as if I had raised up her salary.

"Why?"

"Because," I answers, "a man likes to believe

he marries a woman and not no time clock. Clocks has always filled up the divorce courts. Ask any lawyer if you don't believe me. Now, tie that and let me know what's new besides the date?"

She begins thinkin'. Then she says:

"Mr. Hall, of the Exhibitors National called, but I told him they would not be no more releases on back editions of Robin's pictures. Next in order, Steve comes in, all gloomed up because he can't get a real Chinese prayer rug for a prop' to be used in 'Desperate Donald and the Yellow Peril.' I told him he should ought to go down to Pell Street for the same. That's all, except the Sunbeam people called up twice and wanted to speak to you personally."

When I hears this, I gives the ceiling the double-O. It didn't take no high pressured intelligence to understand they was something stirrin' with this here rival company. From the bone Joe pulled in lettin' the cat get out of the bag, up to the double telephone calls, I knew they was somethin' in the air besides the smell of Miss Holliday's perfumery.

"All right," I tells her, "you may now return to

your novel, or your knittin', or whatever you are doin', and send Gavin into me on your way out."

She nods, and just to show me she ain't sore because I'm wise she is knittin' a hammock for next summer, she hands me a couple of perfectly good smiles and breezes. After the female goes I gets busy with the mail, and in no time at all Ted Gavin comes in.

"Mornin' boss," he chirps, "I hope you're feelin' well to-day."

"I'm feelin' good enough to give you a job," I says, lookin' at him coldly. "Take a load off your ankles and loan me your ears."

He takes the chair Miss Holliday just vacated and grins.

"They is about the only things I haven't not lent," he says. "Believe me, this studio has all the tramps and grafters in the world!"

I laughs.

"No," I hollers, "they is two left over and they is up to my house! But leavin' go of this here comedy stuff, let's get down to brass nails, as the sayin' is. Have you any good ideas for the next picture we is going to shoot of Robin?"

He pulls some trick papers out of his pocket, and looks as wise as a boiled owl.

"I have gotta grand idea," he says, "and I am proud of it! What's the matter with makin' another double reeler of the kid, showin' him here in the studio, doin' all those unnecessary stunts he pulls off when no one is lookin'. We could call it 'The Studio Child,' and it ought to be a whale. I thinks the idea is immense."

I didn't think so.

"They isn't nothin' immense aroun' here," I tells him, "unless it is your feet! Where do you get that 'studio' stuff? Do you think we have nothin' to do except give away the secrets of this here Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co.? After the public got a flash at what we do, and how we make our fillums, they would think they was as wise as the guy what wrote the dictionary. And they wouldn't not take no more interest in our future releases. Gavin," I goes on to say, "if ivory was worth fifty bucks a pound, you'd be terrible valuable! Go out and take a walk, and try and come back with a better idea than that there one."

He gets as red as a wop's handkerchief, and runs his fingers through his hair.

"Have a heart, boss," he says. "It might seem a cinch to *you* to be settin' up all night to get ideas for new stuff for Robin, but believe me it ain't."

"Just a minute," I says, buttin' in. "You is draggin' down a salary here that a bank president wouldn't sneer at, and you is gettin' it for *new* ideas for Robin. I'm right, ain't I?" He nods. "Sure! Well get 'em! And don't show up in this here private office of mine until you *do*!"

He gets up and sighs like a breeze rushin' down an alley.

"All right, boss! Only gimme a little time."

I waves a hand.

"Sure! Take all you want — a couple of hours ought to be enough."

He nods and totters weakly away, while Miss Holliday comes through the door before it is closed after him.

"They is a representative of the Sunbeam Picture Company outside," she says calmly. "Shall I send him in or give him the gate?"

I have found it to be — outside of fire insurance

— a good policy to meet up with the worst of anythin' right away, and not try to duck it nor to use any of this here cameraflags stuff.

"Send him in," I tells her, "and then get a couple of husky bouncers to wait outside until I ring for them. They might be needed."

A couple o' minutes pass, and then into the room comes a sawed-off bird with more whiskers on his face than I have money in the bank. Right away I recognizes him as bein' no less person than Jeremiah Duke, the Vice-President of the Sunbeam Co., and one of its directors. After the prelims is over, and he has helped hisself to a chair, and a box of cigarettes I had absent-mindedly left on the desk top, we was ready for the main bout.

"Now," says Jerry, "gettin' right down to cases — as both your time and mine is limited — I have came to speak to you about Robin, alias little Edward Simpkins."

"I didn't need to be no mind reader to know that," I answers. "What about him?"

Jerry looks at me, as if he didn't like the color of the suit I was wearin', and hides his hands in his whiskers.

"Exactly," he goes on, in one of these here oily voices. "Well, the male parent of Robin, by name one Joseph Simpkins, has wrotten askin' us to make him an offer of what we would pay for a year for his son's services. Such bein' the case, I thought I would first come here and ask you if you had a contract with this here Mr. Simpkins. Before doin' business with him we should like to know is they any obstacles in the path."

This struck me so funny I bust out laughin'.

"I fail to see anythin' funny," says Jerry, "in what I have just said."

"You're the joke yourself!" I hollers. "You and Joe Simpkins, tryin' to sneak away my child star! No, they is no contract between me and my brother-in-law, and they will never be one for the reason that I wouldn't not do no business with him for love nor for money!"

"Thank you," says Jerry, gettin' up and takin' his hands outta his beard. "*That* is all I wanted to know. Good-day!"

He turns and bows hisself out, leavin' me to look at nothin' at all. It didn't take no expert accountant to figure out what the trouble was. It was as



plain as the spots made by candy on Robin's suits. Joe and Carrie had doped out I wasn't not payin' their child enough kale. They was castin' around, and lettin' on to the different companies that Robin was open to offers, just to see if they could better the five hundred dollar insult, which every week I was payin' the boy, for actin' natural before the camera.

Gracie and me was both wise to this even before Joe made the bull about the letter he was gettin' offen the Sunbeam Co., and friend wife had it all framed up I should slip Robin an extra century, if worst came to worst. She argued it was better to come across with a hundred more, than to lose the best box office puller any fillum company ever had.

"Gracie," I had said to her, "you is my wife, and on account of this I listen to you. But I will tell the world fair that before Joe and Carrie stick a gun in my face and hold me up — even for *five* bucks, *which I dont wan't to give* — I will sell out my movie picture company and get a job as chambermaid in the subway!"

I was thinkin' of this, as I went down into the

studio, to see if by any chance this Jerry guy had sneaked in to talk to Robin. He wasn't nowhere in sight but the kid was. My namesake was settin' on a property divan, surrounded on the north by Norma Delightful, and on the south by a nice cold bottle of ginger ale, which he was toyin' with, and occasionally drinkin'.

When he seen me comin' he tried to hide the bottle but I was too quick for him.

"Lay off that stuff!" I snapped, grabbin' the ginger ale away from him, "this ain't no medicine to cure no pains in the stomach!"

Norma smiles at me, and a bunch of supers all begin grinnin'.

"Do let the boy be, Ed," Norma says, in a voice as sweet as honey. "Ginger ale wouldn't not hurt a fly, and he likes it so."

I laughs coldly.

"If that is so," I says, "just come up to my house any night after he goes to bed, and listen to some of his solos. Maybe ginger ale wouldn't not hurt a fly, but Robin isn't not a fly. And lately his stomach has been more tender than a pet corn, and actin' like a scenic railroad gone mad!"

I made a grab at the glass Robin was holdin', but he drunk fifty per cent of it, and let the other half play around on his suit before I could get it.

"I fooled you Runcle Ed!" he yells. "I fooled you that time!"

I turns around and catches sight of Miss Murphy, gassin' with a couple of scene shifters.

"Listen," I says, goin' over to her, "you draw your salary for takin' care of Robin, and not for makin' dates with these birds. You know as well as I do both Joe and Carrie has, for *their* own health, decided to put the bars up when it comes to lettin' little Edward eat candy or sweets of any kind. You know this, but how comes it he gets away with a bottle of ginger ale the minute your back is turned?"

She begins to look in every direction but the one in which I is standin', and coughs a couple of times, like she has a sore throat.

"Miss Norma gaven him the stuff, sir," she apologizes, "and I didn't not want to interfere with what she done."

"Never mind what Miss Norma wants," I cuts in. "He don't keep *her* awake all night. I don't want him to have nothin' to eat of any

kind, nor of any description. That goes! Now stick around for a minute and I'll tell you what I want you to do."

I leaves her and goes over to Nick White, who is directing the Chinatown slap-stick comedy, which everybody, includin' me, says is a bear and a scream. When Nick gets through directin' a couple of Chink gunmen gettin' beat up by a comedy policeman, I lays a hand on his arm.

"Robin isn't not wanted any more to-day is he, Nick?"

He shakes his head and I goes back to Miss Murphy.

"Listen," I says to her, "you and Robin go out to the car, and take a ride up to White Plains, or somewhere for the afternoon. The both of you come back here at five o'clock exactly. If you want to keep on friendly terms with your job, *don't* not take him *home*, no matter how much he cries nor no matter what he says! Un'erstand!"

She tells me she does, and grabbin' a hold of Robin's hand, she leads him away. It was then I seen he had been sittin' on another bottle of ginger ale of which I knew nothin' . . .

A couple o' days passed, and neither Joe nor Carrie had anythin' more to say regardin' the Sunbeam Picture Co., or about wantin' to slip into the studio when we was shootin' Robin's stuff. I kind of got the idea the Sunbeam people couldn't not match the little old five hundred Robin was gettin', and that Joe and Carrie had decided to leave their child be with me.

Meanwhile Gavin had doped out a new scenario, and while he still used the name 'The Studio Child,' they was different action in the piece from what he had first told me. I had looked the story over and seen it was a peach. The studio mentioned in the title wasn't not no movie studio, but an artist's studio, and Gavin had gave Robin a part what fitted him like a glove. My nephew was supposed to be one of these here little Lord Fountainroys, wearing a trick suit and a harmless expression — a 'mamma's' boy,' and an 'angel child' from the ground up. Gavin had also framed up some great stuff, such as havin' Robin paint over one of these master-piece things, which the artist in the picture was supposed to sell Norma for a couple of million bucks. Also, they was some tricks consistin' of

Robin ridin' a bicycle down the side of a roof; gettin' throwed down a chimney; fallin' through a glass roof, and keepin' the action hot by throwin the contents of the artist's strong-box to a crowd below.

The thing shaped up better'n Venus, and Robin hisself was in good trim, havin' been kept away from candy and sweet stuff for three days runnin'. Then on the mornin' Nick White was to shoot the first scenes, Joe at the breakfast table begins.

"Ed," he says, "startin' to-morrow mornin' our son Robin will no longer be in your employ! To-morrow mornin' he begins workin' with the Sunbeam Picture Co., which same is to pay five hundred and twenty-five iron men each and every Saturday night to Carrie and me."

For a moment they was a silence like somebody had just asked for donations for the orphan children in Scandinavia. Gracie gives me a look that said, "I told you so," and Joe finds the view of the Palisades very interestin'.

"Yes," says Carrie, "we have got a date for nine o'clock to-night, at the residence of Mr. Jeremiah Duke, who is connected with the company, to

sign a contract for one whole year. Of course," she says quickly, "we is much obliged to you for makin' our son famous from coast to coast, but everyone has to look out for themselves in this world — "

Joe gets up and I seen what he was after.

"*Leave them cigars alone!*" I shouts, "or you'll be goin' back to Great City by express collect!"

I was about to add somethin' else to the warnin', but Gracie, stickin' a little cream in her coffee, catches my eye and makes a sign to lay offen the whip.

"Bein' you are my brother-in-law," Joe says, comin' back to the table, "I will give you an option on Robin's services. Add twenty-five to what Sunbeam is offerin' us, and Edward stays with you. How about it — ain't that fair?"

I begins to smile.

"Listen," I says softly, keepin' tight hold onto my temper, "you might be a shark as a furniture dealer, but what you don't not know about *me* would fill enough books to reach from here to Honk Honk, China. After the dirty double crossin' deal you're tryin' to stick over, I wouldn't not give you a penny, if I owned the bank of every

baby livin'! To my mind you're the explanation of the word useless, and if I didn't not have a clean shirt on at this moment, I would beat you up, and knock you so far that it would take the Empire State Express thirty-two years to reach you! If you only knew what I thought of you, you could sue me for libel, and I have got more respect for these here millionaires what grafts offen the poor than I have for you! Furthermore, while we're on the subject, you're the kind of a bird what would steal your grandmother's false teeth, júst so you would have an excuse not to spend no money to feed her! If you've got one decent human trait about you, I'm for prohibition! Not only that, but you're such a cold proposition that if you grabbed a handful of water out of the East River it would turn to icicles on you! Go ahead — place Robin where you want, but if you try this bribery thing on me again, when you get back to your home town, the folks there will be askin' you on what street was it you got runned over!"

After I gets this offen my chest, I turns and blows out, leavin' Joe and Carrie starin' at each other, numb as a couple o' smelts. The limousine



was waitin' for me, and also Robin, who, on account of not gettin' no candy nor sweet things, is about as pleasant as a nest full of leopards.

"If you open your face," I tells him, as I gets into the car, "I will taken you over my knee and fan you, and you'll be settin' on a cushion for a month, to come! That goes!"

Robin could see I had somethin' on my mind besides my hair part, and he shut up tight as a café at one o'clock.

"Don't be mad at me, Runcle Ed," he says softly, "I don't want no candy — nor nothin'."

I feels my color beginnin' to run down in my shoes again, laughs, and feels better.

"Listen Robin," I says, "try and be on the level with yourself. I know you got a terrible handicap ownin' Joe as a father, but still you didn't pick him, and that lets you out. Don't tell no lies to *me*! I knows perfectly well you is just longin' for a bit of taffy to exercise your teeth on."

He sighs as loud as a factory whistle at twelve o'clock. Then he turns to the window and begins to admire the scenery. It is not long before I begins to hear him whisperin' to hisself.

"Umm!" he says, playin' a tune on the window glass with his finger nails, "first I'd take seventy million candy sticks what is red and white! Then I'd take seventy hundred million chocolate creams. Then I'd take seventy hundred billion molasses kisses. Then I'd take seventy hundred —"

"Hey!" I says, layin' a hand on his shoulder, "If this is a game you is playin', what's the score?"

He turns around and looks at me, as sad as if he had just heard he had to go back to Great City.

"It *is* a game, Runcle Ed," he chirps, "a game called wishin'. You just gotta wish for what you want, and Sandy Claws will bringen it to you —"

I busts out laughin'.

"Why don't you go to the dentist and get that sweet tooth of yours dug out?" I says. "It certainly is tough when you get this way! On the level, Robin, no kiddin', when did you get your last piece of candy?"

He looks at me with his mouth wide open as Broadway on any night, and his eyes began to dance.

"I don't remember," he hollers, "but if you has some candy in your pocket, Runcle Ed —"

I sees what he is after and puts on the brake, but

the thing gives me an idea, and I sits still and lets it develop.

"Forget it!" I snarls when he starts in again.  
"All they is in my pocket is dust — "

I was still thinkin' about the idea when we gets to the studio to meet with some ragin' mob.

"Hey, boss!" shouts Gavin, speaking for the bunch. "What's all this here dope we has just heard about Robin goin' over to the Sunbeam Company?"

"Can it, you fathead!" I growls. "Make a noise like a telegram and beat it! A official statement will be given out later by myself. On your way now, and if you open your face about the Sunbeam company again, you'll find somethin' in your envelope Saturday besides money."

I turns to the crowd, glarin'.

"That goes for all of you! Back to work boys, and let the guy whats runnin' this company take care of it! C'mon, Robin — "

I waves my arms and the crowd falls back. We gets up to my private office with practically no more questions asked. Safe inside my room, I sets Robin in a chair by the window, and gives the

bell for Miss Holliday a solar plexis. She comes in, pale as a sheet back from the laundry.

"Is they any truth in the rumor that the Sun-beam —" she begins, and then seein' the look on my face quits like a dog.

"Yeah," I tells her, "they is more truth than fiction in what you heard. But I think I might be able to fool them yet. Get Nick White up here as fast as the law allows, and then put a chair in front of my door and don't let no one in, no matter if it is King George of England, or Ty Cobb himself!"

She sees I am worried, and thinkin' a smile might do me good, gives me a couple, goes out and closes the door. As she does this, Robin in the window begins to sprinkle.

"I wanna go downstairs!" he weeps. "I want Norma to play with me!"

I is soothin' him, and tryin' to explain he can go down in a little while — possibly five hours or so — when Nick White enters, wearin' a look like the bulls of Wall Street were ready to toss him over the fence.

"What's all this about Robin gettin' drafted to

the Sunbeams?" he says, while I turn the key in the lock and takes off my collar and tie.

I waves him into a chair and grabs a cigar, givin' Nick it's brother.

"Nick," I begins, "I always knowed rumors were as fast as the horses you *didn't* bet on, but I never knowed the Sunbeams has already shed some of this here light on the fact they is to take Robin over. His old man is gonna see Jerry Duke to-night about him, and to-morrow Robin is goin' to begin work for them — "

Nick begins to breathe like a fish out of water.

"And you're gonna let him go?" he hollers. "Is you going to set back and let him get stole from under your eyes! He is the best card this, or any other studio ever had, and he is worth more to you than a diamond mine down in Africa. Ed, if this kid goes, I go too! That's the way I feel about it!"

I lets some smoke float up to the ceiling, and then looks across at my little namesake, who is makin' hisself comfortable, throwin' pen-points at the people in the lot below.

"Did you ever in all of your life," I asks Nick,

"see anybody put anythin' over on me without a struggle? You can bet your home in the Bronx you never did! *No!* And that is why I brung you up here — to listen to a idea I have gotten in mind, and which I think will keep Robin *here* on the job! I thought this idea outta my own nut, and if Gavin hisself heard it, he would turn as green as a new dollar bill with jealousy!"

I begins to outline what I have in mind, and he listens as calm as a night in June. After I had talked for about five minutes, his face lights up like a bird passing the Statue of Liberty, and he chuckles.

"Ed," he hollers, "that is certainly some idea, and I think it should ought to work. I will be only too glad to direct it, but I advise you to get the *stuff* first."

I gets out of my chair and we shakes hands. Next I goes to the door against which Miss Holliday is settin', and sticks my head through it.

"Listen," I hollers to her. "Tell Dugan to dash over and get a ten-pound box of chocolate bonbons in a hurry!"

When the office boy had busted a world's record

gettin' back with the confectionery, I, Nick and Robin begun rehearsin' my idea. . . .

The following morning, when me and the wife was sittin' down to breakfast, we notes the absence of two parties, namely Joe and Carrie.

"They is in their room," Gracie says, "whisperin' together like a pair of gunmen. I heard them when I came down the hall."

I sets down, unfolds a copy of the mornin' newspaper, and looks out of the window at the Palisades, which is still there.

"They must have got home from seeing Jerry Duke terribly late," I says. "I didn't not get into the hay myself until twelve o'clock, and Carrie and Joe and Robin wasn't home then."

Gracie begins to attack her grape-fruit, and after she gives me a sample of it — in the eye — she lets up and lays down her spoon.

"Keepin' Robin out as late as if he drove an owl taxi, didn't not make him sleep no better," friend wife says. "He must have had pains in his stomach, because he cried all night."

I grins, listenin' for Joe's footsteps.

"The bird what said these walls is soundproof," I murmurs, "is a liar by the clock, and if he wants any proof of this soundproof stuff, let him come up and sleep here a night when Robin has the jim-jams."

At this moment in walks Carrie and Joe, side by each, and lookin' as pleasant as a rainy March afternoon.

"Good mornin'," they says together, floppin' into their chairs at the table.

I snickers out loud.

"Good mornin'," I says to Joe. "If Robin is workin' for the Sunbeam Company you had better be on your way with him to the studio. I hear Jerry Duke likes lateness about the same as a chorus girl likes water!"

No sooner I says Jerry's name, Carrie's eyes begin to flash.

"Don't say nothin' to me about that Jerry Duke!" she yells. "Before I would let that rough-neck have charge of my son, I would sooner drown him in the ocean!"

Gracie slips me a look and I gives her a wink in return.



"Yeah," snarls Joe, "the big tramp would have got beat up by me hadn't he not been so old. I could hardly keep my hands offen him!"

I made belief I was as surprised as if the doctor had said "Twins," and looks at them both with a stare.

"Why? What was the matter?" I asks. "I thought you and Jerry would get along as well as crackers and cheese — him being the crackers and you the cheese!"

Joe is so sore he forgets his breakfast, and begins to march up and down the room, talkin' as he does so.

"Ed," he says, "because you is my brother-in-law, and because I always did like you, I'm gonna tell you exactly the kind of a dirty deal we got offen this bird Duke. We gets down to his house on time, and while we was talkin' to him, Robin accidentally breaks one of these here vase things in the parlor. This gets Duke sore — as though it was our child's fault — and he says he will deduct the cost of the vase out of Robin's first week's salary. Then he gives me a contract to read over, and while Carrie and me is doin' it, Robin is playin' around with a beanshooter what someone given him, and

accidentally he hits Duke on the back of the head with a stone — ”

Carrie draws a breath.

“Yes,” she says, “and will you believe it, Ed, when I tell you the big brute wanted to beat him up — a little child like that! Joe quiets him down by telling him it is tricks like what you pay him real money for.”

“Yeah,” Joe chimes in, “what do you know about that, Ed! Then because Robin accidentally breaks a window before I can grab the beanshooter away from him, and because he gets hold of some matches which had no business to be left layin’ around, this Duke gets up in the air and starts callin’ our child names such as brat and so forth. Well, just to show how much I thought of him and his rotten company, I grabs up the contract, tears it in a hundred pieces or more, and throws them all in his face!”

Gracie and me busts out laughin’, and Joe, getting back both his second wind and his appetite, sets down and falls to.

“That is certainly tough,” I says, “and I don’t blame neither of you for doin’ what you done.”

In comes Roger and tells me the car is waitin' downstairs.

"Ed," says Joe, halfway through his first omelet, "if anybody ever tries to make me place Robin with any company outside of yourn, I will give them a good bust in the eye! And Ed," he continues, "while we is on the subject, I would be much obliged if you would have your lawyer draw up a contract for Robin and me and you."

Roger throws me into my fur coat and hands me a derby hat.

"I will do that very thing!" I says, makin' for the door.

Just as I reached it, Carrie bein' a woman, has to have the last word.

"And Ed," she chirps, in a voice as soft as cream, "do tell the people at the studio to be careful not to give Robin no candy. He was sick at his stomach all night from candy someone gaven him yesterday — "

REEL FOUR

*LITTLE GOLDIE GOLDBLOCKS*



## REEL FOUR

### *LITTLE GOLDIE GOLDBLOCKS*

"THEY is no gettin' away from it," says Nick White, "the Sunbeams has sure got one grand drawin' card in this here little Goldilocks kid. Un'er'stan' Ed, I ain't sayin' she can touch Robin in any way, but all the same the fans eats her stuff up and hollers for more. And why — simply because she is a gal! Now Robin is right at the top of his form, but still it is a novelty to get a flash of a little gal cuttin' up and doin' stunts. Anyone would expect that in a boy, but when a gal pulls it it goes over twice as big!"

I lights a fresh cigar and nods.

"You're right," I answers, "last night I and Gracie went over to the Cosmopolitan Palace for nothin' at all except to get a slant at this Goldilocks kid, and what you has said is true and more. She's there heavy, but anybody who has only got one half of an eye, can see Jerry Duke, bein' dis-

appointed in not bein' able to steal Robin, has went and dug up this here little skirt to enable him to gather in some of the golden freckles what we is gettin'. And by the way, couldn't I not throw a law suit into him for imitatin' Robin's stuff? I'm gonna ask my lawyer the next time I get down town."

Nick blows some smoke rings and frowns.

"If I was you," he says, after awhile, "I would try and get some dope on who this Goldilocks kid really is; how much she gets by the week — if she does get it; how long her contract is for — if she has got one, and who the parents are."

I has to laugh at this.

"What do you think I am — a defective? Or have all I got to do is just to pick up the 'phone and ask Duke them questions? And they is a swell chance I'd get an answer, hey?"

Nick moves his shoulders, spills some ashes on the floor, and walks over to the door.

"Suit yourself Ed," he says, "but if I was in your shoes I'd get busy at once, if not sooner."

"If you was in my shoes," I answers, "you'd be cursin' with the pain, on accounta them being

too tight on the toes! Much obliged for the advice. But I won't get worried — yet! This Goldilocks can't grab all the coin in sight, and wait until the public gets a flash of Robin's 'Day of Rest' howl. They'll have somethin' to think about."

"It's a great picture," he admits, "but still don't forget we ain't wise to what Duke is makin', too."

With this he blows out, and no sooner is he gone the door is jerked open, and in walks Joe.

"Ed," he bawls, comin' directly to my desk, "it has began to rain so Carrie sent me down with Robin's rubbers."

"In the future," I tells him, "don't come marchin' in here until Miss Holliday gets ahold of your name, and finds out if I'm busy or not. You might not know it but they is rules to this office, just like they is to any company what makes real dough!"

He helps himself to a chair and yawns.

"Yeh? Well, I don't see no signs sayin' to knock before enterin' in, and for all the sign of your secretary outside, she might be in Japan. Anyway, why should I go and spend a coupla beans



gettin' cards printed up just to hand you? You know me as it is."

I laughs.

"To my sorrow, yes!"

He yawns again and licks his lips.

"Well," he goes on, "when I gets cards for you, you'll know it!"

"Listen," I says coldly, "if you has come here to hand me an argument, see Miss Holliday. She takes care of that end of the business. Now you can just leave Robin's rubbers here and beat it."

He starts lookin' all around my desk for any cigars that have been left in the open, but don't find none.

"Ed," he says after a minute, "I left the package with Robin's rubbers in the subway, and consequently I haven't not got them. But if you will stake the child to a pair, you can take the fifty cents outta his salary at the end of the week. That will ~~then~~ leave four hundred and ninety-nine dollars and ~~fifty~~ cents even."

I puts my hand on a glass paper weight.

"If you don't lay off that stuff," I snarls, "they

will be somethin' comin' to you, and not at the end of the week, but right *now!*"

He gets up outta his chair and picks up his hat.

"If I had a temper like yours," he says, "I would do my best to change it."

I sees he's goin', so I lets go of the paper weight.

"Yes, you would!" I sneers. "You don't never change nothin', not even your collar! Why the one you has on now looks as though it came direct from Pittsburgh."

He beats it to the door and grabs a hold of the knob.

"That's all on account of *you*," he whines. "Behind my back you went and told your laundry not to accept my stuff no more. What can I do?"

As he was standin' there, I suddenly gets an idea in my nut that may be I can use him for somethin' else than a person to bicker with.

"Come back here, Joe," I says, tryin' to make my voice pleasant.

Bein' a grafter, and devotin' all his time to seein' how much he can get away with off of me, has left him no time to know what's goin' on in the world outside. Thus I know he is unaware of Goldie

Goldilocks threatenin' the popularity of Robin. I tells him all about it, and instead of bein' worried, he shows his brain work by laughin' like it was the funniest joke he ever heard.

"Ed," he yells, "you is wastin' your time runnin' a movie picture studio. They is more managers on Broadway than they is fish in the sea, only lookin' for comedians like you to make rich and famous!"

He opens the door, just as I gets up to my feet.

"Get away from outta here before I hit you with the desk! You is so thick that what I have just told you must be like a fairy tale to a child!"

The door closes, and I hear him still laughin'. Even when I looks outta my office window, and get a slant at him walkin' through the rain, his shoulders is still shakin'.

A coupla mornin's later, whilst waitin' for the garage to send my limousine around to the flat, Gracie comes into breakfast, where I is sittin' at the table lettin' the servant girl remove the ruins of what was once bacon and eggs.

"Ed, dear," she says, after slippin' me the usual good mornin' kiss, "I have some grand news for you about Mrs. Finnegan."

She slides into a chair, while I gives her the north and south.

"And who is Mrs. Finnegan?" I asks. "I know she ain't no Eyetalian, but I don't think I ever heard you speak of her before."

Gracie shoves a couple of slices of bread into a toast machine and turns on the juice.

"I only got acquainted with her the day before yesterday. The butcher give me *her* meat by mistake, and *mine* to her. Bein' a lady, she brung it up to the door. She says she was always crazy to know us, on accounta her sister bein' anxious to go into the movies, and — "

I grabs up the telephone to find out if my car has left yet, or what, and cuts her short with a laugh.

"That leaves her out!" I snaps. "Please, Gracie, don't not get friendly with nobody what has a gang of relatives all ready to make Douglas Fairbanks and Marguerite Clarke has-beens! We is now enjoyin' enough trouble with our own relations, without takin' on no more."

The bird in the garage tells me the car will be right around, and I hangs up the receiver and comes back to the table

"What I was gonna say," friend wife goes on, shootin' a lot of this dignity thing into her voice, "was that Mrs. Finnegan is a good friend of the aunt of Goldie Goldilocks! Now will you sit down and give me a chance to speak?"

I follows out her orders and she goes on.

"Mrs. Finnegan says this Goldie child's right name is Helen Ryan, and that they lives in a little one horse Jersey town called Nutvale. The child's father is a bum what never worked and a liquor hound. It seems the mother was a Robin fan, and seein' Robin on the screen so much, give her the idea that why shouldn't her own child, even though a girl, grab a little change for herself, too? So, Mrs. Finnegan says, the mother took her to Jerry Duke and he gaven her a job. Mrs. Finnegan says that if you want, the next time she sees the aunt, she will find out for you how long Goldilocks is signed up for, and how much she is draggin' down, per the each and every week. Now, how about it, Ed?"

Roger comes in with my hat, coat and stick. Whilst I let him button me into the coat I looks across at Gracie.

## REEL FOUR

III

"Yeah," I says, "tell her to do that very thing, and if her sister, or her mother, or whoever it is wants a job before the camera, will come down to the studio, I will let them take part in a mob scene in Robin's picture, which Nick is at the present time shootin'."

I divides a kiss with her and goes out trailed by Roger, who is sore on me for wearin' a green and red tie instead of the blue one he put out for me. Whilst waitin' for the car, I kids him along, tellin' him it will never happen again, and then he beats it all the way back to the flat to brush off a speck of dust on my sleeve. This done, he ducks for good, and at the same moment my limousine draws up before the door.

"Boss," the chauffeur hollers, "I is late on accounta havin' an argument with a cop, and then havin' to take a poor old sick woman home."

"Listen," I says, "you has too much imagination for a chauffeur — the next time they is a vacancy on the scenario writers' staff, I'll consider you for the job. Now get me down to the studio and don't lose no time doin' it."

I gets into the car and right away gets a sniff

of a funny perfume, and sees a blonde haired hairpin layin' on the floor mat. Then I knows who the poor old sick woman is.

Robin is already on the job, and when I gets into the studio where Nick is shootin' the last interior scenes, I sees my little nephew settin' in a bucket of water with clothes on next to nothin', chewin' on a cake of soap, whilst Norma Delightful is lookin' around the set for somethin' or another.

"Don't look at the camera, Robin!" Nick is bawlin', as Steve Clancy is turnin' the crank, and gettin' all the stuff on the fillum. "Keep watchin' Norma, and keep chewin' on the soap like as if it was candy! Shiver a little like you was cold! That's the boy, Robin! That's —"

Just at this moment Child Edward gets a flash at me, and forgettin' all about the movies for the time bein', he jumps outta the pail of water and commences runnin' at me.

"Runcle Ed!" he hollers, "I don't wanna go 'round all naked no more! I'se cold! Runcle Ed, kin I have my clothes now?"

Nick begins cursin', and tearin' out his hair, while Norma almost weeps.

"Oh, Robin," she says, "what a bad, bad boy to spoil that pretty scene in which I registered so perfectly!"

Forgettin' he is minus a suit and other things, my child star throws himself down on the floor and begins makin' a noise what can't not be told from a dozen engines all goin' at once.

Miss Murphy comes to the rescue with a little trick bath robe, while Nick looks unhappy, and says out loud if Robin was his child, he would beat him good with a cat with nine tails.

"Make him leave me alone!" Robin wails, "I didn't do nothin', Runcle Ed, — honest I didn't do a thing!"

He gets up onto his feet, water runnin' freely from his eyes and off his legs, and comes around to me.

"Listen," I tells him, "if you don't want Runcle Ed to give you a good fannin', stop makin' belief you is Niagara Falls, and git back into that bucket of water, and do what Nick tells you to pretty quick!"

He cries harder than ever at hearin' this, and rushes away from me to Norma, who on accounta



fearin' to get her new gown wet, climbs up on a chair.

"Robin," she screams, "if you put any wet on this dress I will never not give you no more kisses!"

Havin' more sense in his little finger than Joe has in his whole head, Robin stops weepin' as quick as if someone had said the word "candy," and begins laughin'.

The scene is retook again, after which my little nephew is led away to his dressin' room, and Ted Gavin grabs hold of me by the elbows.

"Boss," he says in my ear, "give me a word in private alone with you."

"Come on up to my office, Stupid, and have as many as you want, provided they ain't over a dozen," I answers, breakin' away.

He follows me upstairs, and when he gets into the office, throws hisself into a chair and whistles songs, while I take off my collar and tie.

"Well," I snarls, after he has almost blowed his teeth out, "quit the concert and tell me what is botherin' you, outside of the income tax."

"Boss," he says seriously, "last night goin'

home from work I runs into Jerry Duke, and Jerry takes me in and treats me to a little brew, tellin' me they is a nice job at his studio for me to write the stories, and shot-to-shot stuff for this here little Goldie Goldilocks, at one thousand bucks more, per the each year, than you gives me!"

After he gets through I takes a drag on my cigar and looks at the ceilin' like I never seen it before.

"And — ?" I says, after a while.

He gets up and tries to break the indoor walkin' record, around the room.

"The extra dough, of course, suits me all right," he chirps, "but I hates to leave here on accounta gettin' to be so fond of Miss Holliday. My contract expires next month, but if you will match the Sunbeams offer, I am yours for another one year or five years."

I gives the matter thought.

"Listen," I says, "whilst you are a pretty good scenario writer, Ted, I can't not see my way clear just now to boost up your wages. However," I goes on to lie, "I shall be sorry to see you go, and Miss Holliday will be that same, also, as no less'en three days ago she was tellin' me what a good kid

she thought you was, and how much she would miss you did you ever leave here."

Gavin gets as red as the Sunday handkerchief of any wop, and busts into a high laugh.

"Did she say that?" he cries. "If so, when I goes over to the Sunbeams the first thing I shall ask Jerry Duke is if he needs a new secretary!"

I swallows nothin' a coupla times, seein' my plan for keepin' him go to ruin, and sighs.

"Don't do nothin' rash, Ted. You has been with me for some time, and I hates to see the old bunch go. I will think over this here raise, and let you know about the same later on."

He creeps to the door

"Anyway," he pauses to say, in a low voice, "a guy what expects to take a tumble outta this matrimony thing needs all the kale he can get and more, too."

He goes, and in about ten minutes Miss Holli-day blows in with some letters the postman had just given her.

"Well," I says to kid her along, "Teddy Gavin was just now in tellin' me you and him is about to commit marriage."

She stops still and looks as surprised as if I had asked her out to dinner.

"What!" she screams. "Me marry that shrimp! If he was the last man on this earth I would walk by him without noticin' him! The little sawed-off runt what he is; I should like to hear him make a crack like that around me!"

I opens the first letter, sees it is a bill, and drops it in the trash basket without readin' it.

"You and him ought to get hitched," I says. "You has his number and you don't like him. That saves you doin' it later on!"

The same night after dinner is over, and Joe and Carrie sticks Robin in the hay before goin' out for a walk, which don't cost my brother-in-law a nickel, I and Gracie slips into the livin' room and after I promises to be careful with my cigar ashes, I is allowed to sit down in a chair which my money bought.

"Ed," friend wife begins, "me and Mrs. Finnegan had another conversation to-day in regards to Goldie Goldilock. She has found out off the aunt that Jerry Duk has gaven the child's mother *no* contract, and pays her merely one hundred dollars

per the each week. She understands they is some sort of verbal agreement that the little girl must work six months, so he can see what kind of business her fillums do before signin' her up for any length of time. This is strictly confidential, and Mrs. Finnegan says that if you ever let on that she told you, the aunt would never speak to her no more!"

Gracie grabs a breath and goes on:

"Not only this," she says, "but the aunt told Mrs. Finnegan that Duke is ready to spend money on the little girl, and make her such a drawin' card that Robin won't be nowheres in it with her! She told Mrs. Finnegan this Jerry Duke snake is also gonna try to get Nick White, and Ted Gavin, and Steve Clancy away from you by offerin' each and every one a thousand dollars more a year than you is payin' them."

"Is that so!" I yells. "Well, I guess when it comes to raisin' the ante I is just as good as Jerry Duke, or anyone else! What is more, I will sell every Liberty Bond I has got, and every share of stock I own, before I let *him* put anything over on *me*."

Friend wife puts her finger across her lips.

"Don't holler so, Ed!" she says. "I is not deaf, and you will wake Robin up and you know what that means!"

"I have a good mind to go around and give Jerry Duke a slam on the chin," I tells her.

Gracie begins to smile all over her face.

"Instead of doin' that," she says, "why don't you go one better. I can find out the address of the Ryan's off of Mrs. Finnegan, and you could take the child away from him, and sign her up with your own company for about one hundred and twenty-five per the each week. Her and Robin would make a great pair in the fillums, actin' opposite to each other. Ain't that a great idea, Ed?"

I lets out a shout and grabs her up in my arms.

"Gracie!" I yells, "if you was a man no doubt your name would be J. P. Morgan! You is sure there with ideas! This one is a peach! Watch me get after it!"

A coupla days later, me and Nick White could have been observed settin' in the smoker of a train what was rushin' madly, at a speed of about three miles an hour, toward Nutvale, New Jersey.

"Since this here Goldie `Goldilocks and her mother has begun to enjoy the salary what Jerry Duke has been payin' them," I explains to Nick, "they has thrown Nutvale flat on its back and has gone to that dear New York to live. However, if the dope I has got is right, the father of the child, by name George Ryan, is still adding one point to the total population of the burg we is bound for. I hopes we can find him without no trouble."

My director nods his head and looks outta the window, at scenery which consists of nothin' more nor less than flat marshes.

"I hope so, too," he sighs. "Believe me, Ed, these rural excursions is enough to give a guy the blues."

I bites off the end of a fresh cigar and looks at our fellow travelling companions, which, for the most part, is a bunch of wops and foreigners.

"Anyhow," I says, tryin' to be cheerful, "even if we don't not find this here Ryan, all we is out is one dollar twenty, same bein' the price of the railroad tickets."

In about thirty minutes more, or two hours al-

together, the conductor bawls: "Nutvale!" and I and Nick piles out onto a station what looks like it was built the day after Columbus came over. They is no one in sight, and for company we has a milk can and a mail sack. Around us we sees a few shacks, and a store what is a cross between a restaurant and a blacksmith shop. Also, they is some muddy roads on top of which some mournful lookin' chickens is pickin' amongst the dirt.

"Good-night!" moans Nick. "If they calls this a town, the Emperor of Japan is my brother. Ed, keep this dump in mind, so if we ever needs a location what means misery and solitude, we can come here and shoot it."

I looks all around, but nothin' stirs.

"I wonder," I says, "if we couldn't not get a hack what will keep us from gettin' our knees dirty on that there mud!"

My director laughs sarcastically.

"A hack!" he sneers. "From the looks of this burg a horse would starve to death, or go out of his mind from bein' lonesome!"

We goes across the station, and opens the door of a room what is about two inches wide, and three



inches long. In this place there is three things — a stove, a telegraph instrument, and beside it a bird what looked as old as Noah. He had whiskers growin' all over his face, and as we goes in we gets a flash at a book he is lookin' at and sees it is the most recent edition of the Photo News.

When the old bird sees us, he drops the magazine like he was suddenly shot, begins to take his whiskers out of his various vest pockets, and totters to his feet.

"Listen," I says to him, at the same time slippin' him a cigar to show him we is friends, and not anybody what lives in the village, "we is seekin' one George Ryan. Where can he be found at, and is there a cab or somethin' what can take us to him?"

The old guy looks at us both like we had asked him for his right eye, and begins to laugh.

"Gentlemen," he says, in a voice what can't be told from the high notes on a violin, "Bill Temple did run a hack here, but that was many years ago."

Nick nods his head.

"I knew it," he chuckles. "I'll bet his horse ran away on him, hey; so it wouldn't not have to live here?"

"Well," I goes on, "leavin' that aside, and seein' we will have to buck the mud, just shoot a little information as to where we can interview this Ryan and we will be much obliged."

The old guy points a shakin' finger opposite to the direction we is standin' at.

"Just follow that road," he says, in a squeaky voice, "and after a while you will come to a saloon known as the 'Halfway Inn.' You will find George there."

Nick scratches his head.

"The Halfway Inn," he mutters to himself. "I'll bet it is all the way out."

Seein' there was nothin' to it but to hoof it, we thanks the old guy and leaves him lookin' at the gift cigar. The last thing I sees through the window of the station, as we turns up the road, is Noah hidin' the cigar away in one of these here trick safes.

"Ed," says Nick, after we trudge on for about a half an hour, "do you suppose that bird was kiddin' us?"

I is just about ready to admit the fact, when we come in sight of a building what looks like it is all crippled up with rheumatism.

They is a sign hangin' by one leg over a porch, which is minus pretty near all its floor, and some windows with holes in them almost as big as the Hippodrome.

While we stands and gives the place the double-O, we hears the clink of glasses and some voices.

"Ah — hah!" cries Nick, "so this is where the gay devils of Nutvale congregate!"

I grins.

"Let us now go in and interview one of them."

We trips across the porch, throws open a door, brushin' aside some friendly cob-webs, and steps into a room in which they is a soft bar, a hard bartender, and one man toyin' with some lemon and seltzer.

When both sees us they looks surprised, and begins to tremble like we was a couple of dicks on their trail.

"Is your name George Ryan?" I asks of the bird before the bar.

He sets down his glass and backs away.

"Yes," he whines, "but I'm innocent and can prove it!"

"Lay off that stuff!" Nick snarls. "No matter

what you have did, we forgive you on account of the dump you live in!"

"Listen," I says, dividin' a couple of more cigars between the bartender and the bird we has come to see. "We understand you is the father of Helen Ryan, known on the movie picture screen as little Goldie Goldilocks."

He admits the fact, and we all retires to a table in one corner of the room which is propped up on a soap box.

Here I tells him what we has came for, and drags the contract which my lawyer has gave me, outta my pocket.

"Now," I explains, "if you will sign this here contract, givin' the Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co., of which I is the president, the services of your daughter for one year from date, for the sum of two hundred dollars per the each week, I will give you now as a bonus a brand new ten dollar bill!"

"Make it twelve!" he hollers, his eyes beginnin' to glitter.

"Sure," butts in the bartender, "it's worth twelve if its worth a nickel."

Nick begins to cough, and has to go to the window

and look through some of the holes in the glass, before he can recover hisself.

"All right," says Ryan, "I'm on."

I gives him the printed contract, and a loan of my fountain pen, and he signs it, the bartender and Nick bein' the witnesses. Then I slips him twelve dollars, and tucks the contract away in my pocket, while Nick sighs like he was glad the job is over.

"Bob," says Ryan to the bartender, "how much do I owe you?"

The root beer dispenser yanks a book outta his back pocket like a flash of lightnin'.

"Twelve dollars even!" he hollers.

We gets back to town as the shades of night is fallin', and I stops at the studio to lock the contract up in the safe, and also to give Jerry Duke a ring on the telephone, and let him know his discovery is now my own property.

"— and," I winds up, after givin' him all the dope I has, "bein' that Helen Ryan, alias Goldie Goldilocks, is now workin' for me, just give her the address of my studio, and tell her to report for work Monday mornin' at nine sharp."

He lets out some language which must have

shocked Central, but I cut it short by hangin' up on him. Then I goes home and tells friend wife the good news, also Joe and Carrie, and gives Roger the job of his life by removin' more mud from my person than they is money in the mint.

Bright and early the next mornin' I gets down to the studio with Robin, turns him over to Nick, who is just recoverin' from his trip, and gets a hold of Gavin, goin' with him into my office.

"Now," I says to him, when I is back to my desk once more, "keep this under your hat. Between I and you, I is goin' to give you that thousand a year more you want, and to celebrate it, I am now gonna allow you to write an original five-reel comedy fillum featurin' both Robin and Goldie Goldilocks!"

This almost knocks Gavin outta his chair, but he recovers hisself gamely, and looks at me like I had just told him Miss Holliday had consented to marry him.

"Boss," he hollers, "can it be little Goldie is now ours?"

"Yes," I snaps; "but you don't have to tell everybody down in the street about it! Now show me that you is a real scenario writer and not no

false alarm, by turnin' out somethin' both original and clever!"

"I'll do just that!" he chirps. "I will have a synopsis ready for you that will be a scream."

He beats it away, as Miss Holliday comes in with the information two persons is outside wishin' to talk with me. Their names, she discloses, is Jeremiah Duke of the Sunbeam Co., and Mrs. George Ryan.

"Send 'em in," I directs, "but search 'em first for concealed weapons."

In no time at all in comes the pair of them, Jerry Duke as soft as oil, and Mrs. Ryan, who proves to be a woman measurin' six feet nothin', with an arm on her like a shipbuilder, and a face what is registerin' "suppressed emotions," as Nick sometime says.

"Well, Ed," Jerry begins, as I bows to them both, and shows them where chairs may be had, "that was a pretty cute trick of yourn beatin' it out there to Jersey, and gettin' Helen's old man to sign a contract. Personally, I never did give you credit for havin' so much brains in your head! However, the contract won't hold as a contract made

with a party under the influence of liquor is no good."

"Yes," butts in Mrs. Ryan, "and George must have been ginned, because that is the only way I ever knew him to be. He puts it in root beer!"

"Yeah?" I hisses; "well, such was far from bein' the case. He was as cold sober as the female president of a Woman's Prohibition League! Go ahead," I continues, speakin' directly at Jerry, "try and bust this here contract, and you is welcome to all the fun tryin' to do it! My own lawyer says it is so iron clad that even this here T and NT wouldn't have no effect on it at all!"

Jerry and the lady exchanges glances, and then Duke pulls a sigh what sounds like it comes from the bottom of his shoes.

"I haven't got no time," he says, "to monkey 'round in no law courts. I will do the right thing, and pay you one thousand real dollars to transfer the contract you have made for Helen over to me."

"As far as I'm concerned," Mrs. Ryan horns in, "I don't care if my little tot works for you. The bigger the dough, the better it pleases me."

"How about it?" Jerry asks, standin' up and



fumblin' with his hat. "Are you gonna make this thousand dollars, what is just as easy as rollin' on a log, or are you gonna try and hog the whole comedy fillum business?"

I thinks it over as quickly as I can, and then gets up too.

"Listen," I says to them both, "I will think this here offer over, and whilst I am doin' it, I should like Mrs. Ryan to bring Goldie Goldilocks down to the studio this afternoon and introduce me to her."

The whole three of us moves to the door.

"Go ahead and think it over," snaps Jerry, "but don't take no more than forty-eight hours to do it in, as I will lose my patience and bring suit to break that contract."

Mrs. Ryan shakes hands with me, and slips me a wink.

"I will bring Helen in to you this afternoon," she says to me aside, while Jerry, seein' what a bear for looks Miss Holliday is, pulls out a trick mirror and begins to fix his necktie in't.

Then they beats it, and I ducks down to the studio to tell Nick what has happened. I finds him chewin' the rag with Norma, whilst Robin, dolled

up in an artful Algeron costume, is rehearsin' a scene for "The Day of Rest." He is amusin' himself with a bottle of ink and a tooth brush, with which he is paintin' a white cat black.

I prys Nick away from Norma, and tells him about Jerry Duke's offer.

"Don't do nothin' of the kind!" he advises. "This Duke bird is up to more tricks than a Chink magician. I wouldn't not trust him from here to there with a counterfeit dollar bill!"

"The kid is comin' down this afternoon with her mother," I says, "so if you got any exterior work save it for to-morrow, so you can meet her."

He promises to do this, and I gets a flash at Miss Murphy emptyin' out the pockets of one of Robin's suits. I recognizes even from where I is standin', an amber cigar holder I have been missin' for two weeks or more, and goes over.

"I don't know where Robin picks up all this trash!" Miss Murphy says to me.

"Don't you?" I answers coldly. "That is funny; you is with him all day, and you is paid to look out for what he puts in both his stomach and his pockets!"

She gets red at this, and I grabs up my lost cigar holder from amongst a litter consistin' of a chewed clothes-pin, some stones, a fish-hook stuck in a cork, the stub of an old cigar, and a piece of somethin' that was no doubt once candy, but was completely disguised by being covered with dirt.

"*Camera!*" bawls Nick, and not wishin' to distract my little nephew's attention, I blows back upstairs.

Well, about half past two or three o'clock, Mrs. Ryan comes down to the studio again, this time leadin' by the hand little Goldie Goldilocks herself. The child is about the same age as Robin, has hair the color of a grape fruit, blue eyes, and a complexion that any chorus girl would have gave all of her salary for.

"Helen, dear," the mother chirps, "this is the nice gentleman what you is gonna work for! Shake hands with him!"

Goldie gives me her hand and I shakes it.

"I ith glad to meet you," she lisps, showin' me all her teeth as she does so.

I puts a chair for Mrs. Ryan by the window, and takin' Helen, leads her down to the studio.

They was a rumor about her comin' which has gotten around, and all of the gang is as anxious to meet her as they would be if it had been Mary Pickford herself. She is led around from one to the other and introduced. Then Miss Murphy and Norma drags Robin away from an old "prop" sofa, behind which he is hidin', and he busts out weepin'.

"Robin," I says, grabbin' ahold of his shoulders. "Aint you ashamed to be seen cryin' before this nice little girl what you is now goin' to meet, and what is goin' to act with you in the movie pictures! Come on now, Robin, like a good kid, and say 'Hello' to little Goldilocks!"

Little Helen picks up the ends of her skirts, like they does in dancin' schools, and crossin' her legs makes a low bow in front of him.

"I ith glad to meet you littul boy," she says politely. "Don't cry any more."

When child Edward gets a flash at Goldilocks' face, and hears the strange words she says, he stops cryin' and begins to scream at the top of his lungs.

"Take her away!" he yells. "Runcle Ed take

her away! I don't wanna look at her — I hate her — I hate her!"

He keeps this up, throwin' hisself on the ground and kickin' with his heels, while Helen, lookin' at him as though he was a curiosity, pulls out a stick of peppermint candy from her pocket and begins to calmly suck on it. Whilst she is so doing, Miss Murphy with the aid of I, Nick and Norma, manages to get Robin to a standing position, and holds him there on account of his legs resemblin' rubber bands. Then he gets a flash of Goldie's candy out of the corner of his eye, stops yellin', and looks at her in astonishment. As he does so, the little girl removes the candy from her mouth and sticks out her tongue at him.

"Oo can'th hath none of my candieth," she says, tauntin' him by wavin' the peppermint stick before his eyes.

As she does this, Robin springs from outta our grasps with a shout, grabs the candy outta her hand, and the two of them go to the mat, screamin' like a coupla maniacs; Goldilocks havin' both hands full of Robin's hair, and him kickin' at everythin' in sight.

I leaves the whole studio to separate them, and breaks a world's record gettin' upstairs to my office.

"I hope," says Mrs. Ryan, as I tears in and picks up the telephone, "Helen will like Robin."

I pays no attention to her at all, but shoots a number over the wire to central, and after gettin' it, hears Jerry Duke at the other end of it.

"Jerry," I says, tryin' to make my voice calm, "this is the Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co., — Ed speakin' — "

"Yes," he answers me, "and how about that there proposition?"

"I have been thinkin' it over," I says, "and no doubt you is right thinkin' it is a dirty trick stealin' your star off of you. Send a certified check for a thousand bucks right away, and I will give you the contract and your star — if they is anything left of her!"



**REEL FIVE**  
***A TOUCH OF JAZZ***





REEL FIVE  
*A TOUCH OF JAZZ*

"HONEST, boss," says Ted Gavin, "if ideas was money, I'd be a beggar in the streets! I has set up each and every night this week, tryin' to dope out a brand new scenario for Robin that'll suit you, and please Nick, and for all the good it done me I might just as well have gone to bed and slept!"

"Bein' awake or asleep with you," I says, "is the one and the same thing! Now, look here Ted," I goes on to remark, "bring me stuff and not excuses, and the both of us will get along like a coupla lovers in summer! You've been stallin' on this new scenario long enough. It's about time you come through with somethin' outsid a hard luck stories, and lost sleep!"

He feels his chin like he was makin' sure it was still with him, and nods his head.

"I know it!" he moans, "I know it! But what can I do when my brain quits cold on me?"

I grins at this.

"Never mind what you're brain is doin'. And don't say you *can't* do it. They is no word like that known in the army, or in movie studios. A clever boy like you, Ted," I says, slippin' a little of the old oil into my voice, "should'nt not ought to have no trouble at all in framin' a good story with a lotta clever comedy in it. You done it time and time again in the past, and you can do it now if you want. Beat it homie, slip into the hay, and tear off some sleep. Then, maybe, when you waken up, they will be somethin' in your head besides nothin'."

Ted gets up onto his feet.

"I gotta do somethin'," he mumbles, "that's a cinch!"

I smiles.

"Sure — so get rested up so you can do it!"

He totters away whilst I sends down to the studio for Robin. The office boy I sends rushes back in less than thirty minutes, and says the child has already gone to the flat with Miss Murphy.

I'm just about to do the same thing, they bein' less business in the office than they is in bathin' houses in December, when the door opens and in comes Mike Hanley.

"Ed," he chirps, approachin', "I'm gonna make you a free present. I'm gonna give you four tickets what is good for the openin' of the new Café Jazbo to-night. My cousin is a good pal of the manager down there, and he got 'em for nothin'. Take them and be welcome."

He sticks a fin in his pocket, and drags forth two pairs of pink pasteboards. These he shoves across the desk, and I picks them up before he can change his mind.

"Much obliged, Mike," I says, "if they is anythin' what I and the wife loves, it is new restaurants where the waiters ain't on to us. We'll use these tickets nicely."

The same evenin' when I gets to the flat, I finds Gracie in the library, readin' a magazine and wearin' a dress for which she is hidin' the bill on me.

"Where is Carrie and Joe at?" I inquires, feastin' my eyes upon her as the sayin' runs. "How comes it they ain't in sight?"

The wife sits up, allows me to split a kiss with her, and smiles.

"They took Robin out for a walk," she replies. "They've been gone a long while now. I ain't sure whether they'll be home for dinner or not."

"I'm sure!" I answers. "When the gong rings they'll be riskin' life and limb to get to the dinin' room. When the both of them passes up a free meal, it'll be the day Rockefeller gets flung into bankruptcy!"

Gracie laughs harder at this, just as the latest French maid she had imported from the Bronx announces the dinner is ready and waitin'.

As she tells us of the fact the front door is hurled open, and in piles Joe, Carrie, Robin, and Miss Murphy. My little nephew is as usual — meanin' moist, and they is a red spot on one cheek what looks suspicious.

The minute he lies an eye on me, he begins tellin' me his troubles.

"Runcle Ed," he sobs, "papa give me a lickin' and wouldn't give me no candy! I seen a little gal on a bench what was eatin' some candy, and when I tried to take it off her, papa hit me!"

"I was never so surprised," horns in Carrie, "I thought my darlin' child has been learned better than to act like a roughneck!"

"What d'ye expect?" I laughs. "Look at his father!"

Joe, who is lettin' Roger drag him outta his coat, turns his head to me.

"Yeah?" he snarls. "Well, if I'm a roughneck I got it from wearin' them rotten collars of yourn!"

I is about to come back at him when the wife steps in.

"For goodness sakes," she says, "if you boys must fight go downstairs! But don't crab a dinner what is waitin' to be ate!"

Miss Murphy removes Robin still sprinklin', whilst the four of us tumbles into the dinin' room, where the soup is gettin' cold.

The minute Joe sits down he is happy again!

The meal gets over with practically no fightin' at all — Joe merely gettin' sore at a remark I makes, and tryin' to hurl a butter dish at me.

"Well," says Gracie, when the servant girl rushes away with our coffee cups, "what is on the program for to-night?"

This reminds me of the free tickets Mike gives me.

"Oh," I chirps, givin' the wife a nudge, "we 'is all goin' down to attend the openin' of a brand new café."

Joe looks at Carrie. She looks at the Palisades.

"New café?" he sneers. "Where d'ye get that stuff? Do I look like a sucker what is gonna blow six or seven dollars and get nothin' outta it but a headache?"

I pulls out the tickets and passes them around.

"Oh!" says Carrie, after givin' the passes a examination. "These here are compliment tickets — they is no cost attached to them!"

Hearin' this Joe grabs them away from her and gives them the double-O.

"That's different!" he hollers. "I'll get dressed now!"

Both him and Carrie ducks away and Gracie laughs.

"Ain't it funny," she remarks, "what a bit o' graft will do?"

About half past nine, the brother-in-law and Carrie trail in, and announce they is ready to

depart. Joe wears a dress suit what cost at least fifteen berries, and keeps peerin' into the mirrors to observe the effect. I informs him that he would be a riot in burlesque, and he is decidin' whether I has insulted or flattered him, when the door opens and in walks Miss Murphy, to say she can't do a thing with Robin, who is screamin' his head off, and is every place in the room except in his bed.

Carrie leaves to see what can be did, goin' off with the nurse. Then they is a call for Joe who don't wanna go in for fear of gettin' the two dollars worth of shirt front he wears, dirty.

"The only thing the matter with that kid," snaps the wife, "is that he needs a good whippin'. He has got the pair of them buffaloes and all he has got to do is to shout for whatever he wants."

As she finished speakin', the tumult in the other room, what is lettin' the neighbors get exercise by beatin' on the steam pipes, comes to a end. A coupla seconds pass and then into the room marches Joe and Carrie, leadin' Robin, who is fully dressed in his clothes, between them.

"They is nothin' to it," says Carrie, red in the



face. "Our son is on his bad behavior and we can't go and leave him."

"Therefore," chimes in Joe, "we will have to bring him with us!"

Robin, who is smilin' all over his face, knowin' he has the best of it, busts into giggles.

"I wanna go! I wanna go!" he yells. "I wanna go somewhere."

"If I was'nt not your uncle," I hisses, "I'd tell you where to go! As it is lay off that song and dance or you will get a spankin' on the seats of your pants that you will remember when you gets to be seventy years of age!"

Ten minutes later sees the four of us climbin' into the car, my little nephew as happy as if he had been gave the freedom of Huyler's. After Joe makes a pass at Carrie for wipin' her feet on him, and wantin' to know does she think he is a millionaire what can afford to have his pants pressed every day, I passes the word to the chauffeur and we starts.

We finds the Café Jazbo is located near to Broadway, and is covered with both electric lights and class. They is a few automobiles standin' in front

of it, about six hundred even, and after we is allowed three inches of standin' room, we gets out,

"Oh, boy!" yelps Joe, his eyes shinnin'. "This is the kind of a place I is crazy mad about! Believe me, the kind of a family I come from was brought up in joints like this! Sometime, Ed," he says, turnin' to me, "I wanna tell you my family tree!"

"What do I wanna hear about a bunch of cheap grafters for?" I answers.

We goes up some imitation marble steps and into a room what has got a mirror in it for every chorus gal livin'. Here some bandits known to the trade as coat check boys, helps theirselves to our hats and coats, sneerin' when they looks at the label in Joe's and sees it only cost two bills. The burglars hide the lids, and a big guy with a diamond in his shirt the same size as a onion, comes over and demands our tickets. I produce the same and we is then allowed to go inside and surround a table.

"Oh, look it!" Robin shouts, the second we gets into our chairs. "Runcle Ed, they is a lady smokin' over there!"

Carrie gives him a shake, and whilst he goes

dumb he can't stop starin', and imitatin' the dame he looks at, makin' belief he is smokin' too, and blowin' imagination smoke rings until it kidnaps the woman's animal, and chuckin' away her cigarette, she tells her partner what she thinks of people what brings childrens into cafés. Then Carrie makes a remark or two on her hook, expressin' her opinion of cigarette fiends, and statin' maybe Joe has a pipe he ain't usin'.

My brother-in-law gets seated comfortable and looks around.

"It's lucky we is gettin' in for nothin'," he says. "I'll bet the prices in this place is somethin' terrible!"

I steps on Gracie's foot.

"When you is out on a tear," I says, "and spend thirty cents or more at one time, I'll bet every insane asylum in Great City is sweepin' out they best rooms —"

He is too busy peerin' about, and tryin' to notice if all present is wise to his dress suit to answer, but Carrie presents me with a glare and sniffs.

Well, after Robin gets his hands slapped for foolin' with the electric lamp on the table, a waiter

gets absent minded and comes over to us, wantin' too know if we has service, and if not what does we want.

"Gimme the whole bill of fare!" Joe yells. "What I ate at the flat has give me a good appetite!"

"I think," says Carrie, "I'll get Robin a little lamb."

My nephew shows tears.

"I don't want no little lamb!" he weeps. "I wanna little dog what I can call Tillie!"

The wife explains Carrie is orderin' him somethin' to eat and not to play with, and the waiter turns to me for my order. I and Gracie picks some economical stuff, and everythin' is O.K. until we gets to the vegetable end of it. Here we is stuck, friend wife votin' for spinach and me bein' in favor of cabbage.

"Try the peas, sir," the waiter butts in, tryin' to keep us from comin' to blows.

"Not a chance!" I barks. "The knives here is new, and therefore sharp. When I commit suicide I'll use gas — and let Joe pay the bill!"

Well, after another hour the waiter gets through,

and breezes to tell our wants to the cook. As he goes out some midnight crap specialists in one corner of the room, same bein' nothin' more or less than a jazz band, busts into bedlam and Robin leaps outta his chair like he had sat on a spark. He gets all excited at the music, and it is about as much use to calm him down as it is to keep a show-girl from thinkin' of limousines. The worse the music gets the better he likes it, and he acts like a jumpin'-jack gone mad, shoutin' at the top of his lungs. The people around us enjoys a good laugh, and then someone passes the word that Robin is the famous movie picture star, and after that they is more advertisin' done for him than had I used a magazine.

Next some people gets up to dance on the floor, lyin' they cheeks together and indulgin' in what is known as the shimmeys. Little Edward leaves off yellin' to watch them and no sooner he gets an eyeful, he begins shakin' his shoulders and shiverin' like the temperature was down around zero. This stunt cops a lotta attention, and them eatin' forgets to watch what is goin' on on the floor to keep Robin covered with they glances.

Finally the coons has a heart, gets wore out, and brings the piece they plays to an end. As they does this I suddenly feels a hand on my shoulder and lookin' around sees no less than Ted Gavin standin' alongside of me.

"Some little jazz cootie!" Ted yells, looking over at Robin and throwin' Carrie, Joe and Gracie a nod each. "Honest boss, it's a shame to keep the kid tied up when he knows more about dancin' than Mr. Shimmey hisself!"

I looks my scenario writer over, noticin' he is arrayed in a dress suit what looks like he grew in it, and that he wears a shirt what has more tucks than they is tightwads in Scotland.

"How comes it you is here?" I wants to know. "The last I seen of you, you was due for a date with a mattress and a chance to give them brains you boast of, a chance to get rested."

Ted makes a move like he is brushin' nothin' away from him.

"Mike Hanley give me a coupla free tickets to this place," he explains, "and not wantin' them to go to waste I used them. I can sleep any time, but the tickets was only for to-night. Besides I can

always think better where they is music playin'. It makes me relax."

I laughs coldly.

"If they is not a scenario ready for me in a day or two, I'll relax your salary until you won't reconize it."

Gavin grins like a wolf.

"Don't worry none about that," he says, "sooner or later it'll be shaped up and ready."

"Make it sooner," I says, "or it will be too late!"

He tosses us all a smile and nod to divide, and joins a blonde lady at a table in one corner of the room.

The waiter what took charge of us, waits until we just reaches the point of starvation, before comin' to our rescue with a tray covered with dishes and a napkin. Joe licks his lips at the sight, and Carrie finally gets Robin tamed long enough for him to get a peek at a heap of ice cream, what the Rocky Mountains has nothin' at all on. Once Child Edward sees the same he loses all interest in what is goin' on around him.

Outside the soup bein' as cold as the ocean in January, and the steak bein' as tough as a ash

can, and the coffee bein' full of grounds, they is little or no fault to be found with the meal. Now and then whilst we eats, the jazz band comes to life and throws a fit. About eleven o'clock they is nothin' left in sight but empty dishes and for once Carrie is so full she don't wanna talk. Joe, happy as a hummin' bird with a beak full of honey, sighs and asks me for a cigar. When I passes one what I have been carryin' around, waitin' for the chance to get rid of it, who slides into the table but the waiter, lyin' a slip of paper with more figures on it than is in the Follies, at Joe's elbow.

"What's this?" my brother-in-law says, lookin' surprised.

The waiter coughs.

"The bill, sir."

Joe drinks a glass of water and picks up the paper like it was hot. He looks it over and gets pale as cream. I nudges Gracie who is doin' her best to keep a straight front face, and Carrie yawns, not havin' no interest in anythin'.

"You might be a good waiter," Joe snarls, suddenly, "but you're a rotten comedian! Here is what I think of you and your bill!"



He takes the bill, tears it into six or seven hundred small pieces, and hurls the lot of them into the waiters face. I and Gracie sits up, ready to carry Joe home, but they is no battle, and we is disappointed to see the waiter turn his back and walk away, like gettin' insulted was hardly anythin'.

"How is this for a dirty deal?" Joe barks. "We get free tickets and then they tries to collect, playin' both ends against the middle! Take it from me, the district attorney is gonna know about this place!"

I is about to answer when the bird with the onion size diamond shows up, followed by the waiter.

"What are you tryin' to do?" he asks Joe. "Beat the bill? Or what?"

My brother-in-law pushes Carrie, who is sleepin' all over him away, and calls for the light artillery.

"Beat the bill!" he screams. "The only thing what will get beat around here is you!"

The owner of the diamond grins and winks at friend wife and me.

"Yeah?" he says. "Let me introduce myself — I'm Steve Kid Ryan, the Battling Bruiser! Some-

time when you get chance drop around, and I'll show you newspaper clippin's of my knock-out record. Meanwhile settle up and lets all settle down."

The minute Joe hears who he has threatin', he drinks a coupla more glasses of water.

"Listen," he says, "didn't we not give you our tickets when we come in?"

Robin, who is afraid of the newcomer, climbs under the table. Carrie is the only one what don't get disturbed.

"Are you tryin' to kid me?" the other goes on. "Them pink pasteboards was only good for admission into this here place. They didn't mean," he roars in a voice what attracts only the attention of nine eighths of all present, "you could eat thirty dollars worth of food, remove any of the oil paint-in's what are hangin' around here, or kill any of the waiters! Them tickets saved you two bucks for reservin' the table! Henry," he says to the waiter who is lurkin' behind him, "present this guy with a brand new bill and if he ruins it beat it for me!"

Havin' got this off of his chest he blows. Joe

sinks down in his chair until only the top of his head and ears show. The waiter does some book-keepin', and lets Joe have the twin of the bill what got tore up.

Seein' they is nothin' to it, my brother-in-law sighs like a steamboat requirin' room.

"Ed," he whines, "this is outrageous! We will have to go fifty-fifty on it, I suppose, and make the best of a raw deal, hey?"

*Oh, lady!!*

"Get away!" I laughs, "I didn't tell you to order stuff with prices what would make Tiffany blush for shame! Gimme that bill and I will mark off what I and Gracie made disappear."

"Certainly," says the wife, "that is only fair."

Joe bein' temporarily paralyzed, the waiter does what I asks, and also gives me a loan of his pencil. Addition proves I is minus exactly seven dollars. The other twenty-three belongs to Joe. When I informs him of this he unbuttons his collar, and drinks another glass of water.

"Twenty-three dollars!" he moans. "The savin's of a life-time! Ed," he begs, "gimme a lend of that much until to-morrow."

Friend wife kicks me in the ankles under the table.

"I'm sorry," I lies, "but ten dollars is all I has."

I shows him a bill for proof, and seein' he is defeated again, he wakes up Carrie but puts her to sleep again when she hears what the damages is. Then Joe dives a hand down into his sock and comes up with a tidy roll of greenbacks. The waiter is paid by the both of us and I hands the man a buck for luck.

He thanks me and turns to Joe.

"Don't I get no tip off you?" he asks Joe.

My brother-in-law looks as wise as a raven.

"Sure," he says, grinnin'. "Here is one — always carry an umbrella when it looks like rain!"

By this time the clocks is flirtin' with the hour of twelve. We decides to call it a night and be on our way. Robin is dragged from under the table, where he has gone to sleep, and we beats it into the room where the blackhands has got our hats and coats. Here, I gets mine without no trouble and is slippin' into it when I sees Joe handin' the coat boy a five dollar bill. Thinkin' the shock he had in the dinin' room has unbalanced him, as the

sayin' is, I waits until we gets into the street and then begins.

"What's the big idea?" I asks coldly. "You turn the waiter down on a dollar and hand five to the hat check boy."

Joe smiles.

"Yeah, but look at the swell silk-lined coat he gimme!"

No sooner Carrie gets a flash of it she wants to go back and see if she can't draw somethin' in seal or sable!

The next day is Sunday, and they is nothin' to do but lay around the flat, read the newspapers, argue, and wonder if they is anythin' stirrin' in Gavin's mind in the way of a scenario. For some reason I don't not feel as cheerful as usual, and once and awhile feels somethin' funny goin' on inside of me.

Even when I gets down into the studio, and into my office the followin' mornin', prepared to work and bicker with Gavin, I is still under the weather. Five minutes after I has slipped into my desk-chair, Nick White comes in.

"Ed," he says, "how about the scenario for

Robin's latest? I'm achin' to shoot somethin', and I don't need to be president of this business to know the exchanges all over the U. S. wants a release worse than a loan shark wants money! How about it?"

I removes collar and tie, hides them in the bottom drawer of the desk, and rings for Miss Holliday.

"Find Ted Gavin," I says, when she appears, "and tell him to come up here as fast as the law allows — if not quicker."

She promises to do this and departs, splitin' a wink with Nick which she thinks I don't see.

In five minutes she is back again.

"Mr. Gavin," she says in a weary voice, "hasn't come in yet."

I gives my solid gold Ingersoll the north and south and lets Nick take a peek at it.

"Keep Gavin paged," I says to Miss Holliday, "and no sooner he arrives send him in."

Lunch time comes but my scenario writer don't. Feelin' bad I don't eat, but dines off of a cigar, givin' my attention to a heap of mail, the most of it from exhibitors and exchanges, pleadin' I should

give them anythin' of Robin's, if only a half of a reel. It is two o'clock to the second when they is a knock on the door and in comes Ted, lookin' like somethin' the Bolsheviki has been toyin' with. He looks like he ain't slept since I last seen him, and if I had a nickle for every wrinkle in his suit, I could retire wealthy. Also, he needs a shave worse than Europe needs law and order, and they is enough rings under his eyes to stock a jewelry store.

"Good mornin'," I says, "no doubt you has pushed the clock ahead so far you is unable to catch up with it. But sit down, Ted, and tell me all about that new scenario."

He flops into a chair and rubs his eyes.

"Boss," he says, "if I don't show up with a scenario what is a riot, a bear, a scream and a knock-out, by to-morrow A.M. I give you leave to can me without no notice!"

I looks him over, wonderin' what kind of a stall this is.

"The cannin' will be done without *your* leave," I puts in. "But," I snaps, "this ain't tellin' me the plot of my little nephew's new picture. Has

you got the script ready, is you workin' on it — what?"

He pulls out his watch, looks at it, and leaps outta his chair like he had sat on a wasp.

"I got the thing in my typewriter now. I only come here to let you know I ain't layin' down on the job. Boss," he raves, "once you get a flash at the business and comedy in this here story, you is gonna present me with a slap on the back and no doubt raise my salary!"

I laughs.

"Maybe the slap will be alongside of the jaw," I says, "and possibly the raise will be when I picks you up to hurl you down the stairs!"

He only laughs at this and ducks. Once he is gone I tries to put my mind on my work, but it is as useless as tryin' to play tennis with a golf stick. The somethin' what has been disturbin' me in the inside regions, is a cross between the stomach-aches Robin enjoys, and cramps. As it gets bad I send Miss Holliday out for a powder, but the only good this does is to make it worse. The result is that after a coupla more hours I unties myself, totters down to the car, and gets rushed home to the flat



where I creeps into bed, whilst Gracie, makin' sure it is sickness, and not cellar alcohol that is troublin' me, telephones to a medico.

The doctor rushes over — arrivin' two hours later. He turns out to be a tall, thin bird with a face, if it was his fortune, must leave him poverty stricken. He has a trick beard, and a way of rubbin' his hands every other second that is enough to make a patient feel worse than he does. He goes over me like a second-hand clothes dealer goin' over an article of clothes, taps me from head to feet, listens to my chest with a telephone, and then says I is sufferin' from nothin' more or less than a slight case of ptomaine poisonin' what comes from somethin' I ate — if I didn't eat it I wouldn't not have it. Then he advises me to stay in bed for awhile, tells me to take up golf, writes a full hand of prescriptions, calls for a five-buck fee and departs, leavin' me alone with my pains and friend wife.

Bein' ill, as Gracie calls it, drives all thoughts of the Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co., Gavin, Robin and the like from outta my mind. All I can think of is what time should I take the next pill, and is my fillum company goin' into bank-

ruptcy on accounta my absence. In about a week, however, I is feelin' natural again — which means ready to argue with Joe and Carrie if necessary. The medico, who has gotten to know me like a old friend, goes across me with a tape measure, looks as wise as a boiled owl, and says I can go to the office again, but not to get overheated or excited.

"Send for the car!" I bawls, no sooner the M.D. is gone. "I'm goin' to the studio direct and find out the worse all at once!"

Arrivin' there, I finds the buildin's all in place, and is gave a great hand by the bunch. My hand is shoooken until it aches, and I'm gave a welcome what makes up for bein' sick two weeks.

Then Nick White draws me to one side and crawls up on my ear.

"Ed," he says, "I has got a treat in store for you that is gonna make you forget the meanin' of the word sick. Ted Gavin has turned out a scenario what is better'n a Liberty Bond of any issue. They is more comedy in it than they is in the weather reports in the mornin' newspapers, it flows like the Niagara Falls, and gives Robin a chance for entirely

new stuff. They is six reels to it and already three is complete."

I draws a breath.

"Nick, that is what is known as a unfair advantage. Here I was sick and ill and without givin' me the chance to look over the script, you go ahead and shoot it. Now suppose I don't not like it. What then?"

He laughs.

"Oh, you'll like it O.K., Ed. Why, this would put the worst grouch on the bum. I know what you like and I also know good stuff from the bad. C'mon on in and look it over. If it don't make a hit with you you don't owe me no salary for as long as you have been away!"

He leads me into the projectin' room, goes around to the operator and whispers somethin' to him. The lights go out, a movie picture machine begins to hiss like a snake, and then they falls onto the screen before me, the followin' words

The Enterprise Comedy Fillum Co.

presents

Master Robin Simpkins

in a Comedy of Errors

entitled

"THE JAZZ BABY."

This fades out and the next thing shown is a family of four at dinner. I makes out they is two husbands and two wives. They is arguin' and snap-pin' at one another in a way what seems familiar, and the thing is cinched when Robin comes in led by Miss Murphy herself! Lookin' close I finally gets wise to somethin' — *the set is a steal from the dinin' room of the flat I is allowed to live in and pay the rent of!* Just as I sees this, Larry Keegan puts his hand in his pocket, and draws out a pair of pink tickets. The scene is sub-titled:

*"Here are some tickets I got for nothin';  
good for the grand openin' of the Café  
Bojaz tonight!"*

Then I gets the whole thing — Gavin has done nothin' except to use his imagination and I, friend

wife, Carrie, and Joe, for the purposes of comedy! After a little more business I almost tumbles from out my chair when I sees the front of the *real* Café Jazbo. Still followin' the action carefully, the free tickets is collected, just like they really was, a bunch of humor is got from the coat check boys, and then the bunch blows into the *real* dinin' room of the restaurant, the same bein' filled with imitation diners, what comes from the studio. Nick has even hired the *real* jazz band, and the title of the fillum comes from the stunts Robin pulls when the music plays. He does a shimmy what is a masterpiece of its kind, and the stunts he does with the waiters is so funny that I feel the buttons pop-pin' off my vest. More china is busted than three ten cents stores has in stock, and some slap-stick comedy is put over that is a joy to look at.

The whole thing is immense and when the lights come up again, the tears is streamin' down my face and I feels limp all over.

"How about it?" says Nick beside me. "Some picture, hey?"

I grabs his hand and does everythin' but kiss him.

"Some picture is right!" I howls. "It is just the kind of stuff I was seekin' and prayin' for! It couldn't not be better if it was improved upon! Nick, the cashier will tell you how much I like it when you goes to see him Saturday. And as for Ted, well, any guy what can dig up laughs in Joe, and take a family situation and run it for screams, *deserves* all *he is gonna* get!"

Nick looks as pleased as if I had gave him a good cigar.

"*Phew!*" he sighs. "I don't mind statin' Ed, I was on the anxious seats, waitin' for you to lamp this fillum. I believed it good, but of course didn't know how you was gonna like it!" He sighs again, and we walks across the studio where a few carpenters is buildin' a shower bath set. "Now," he goes on to say, "Ted had got an endin' to the whole thing what is good, but which might be better. He is thinkin' up another endin' to it now. I will look into your office with the script, Ed, in about twenty minutes, and we will go over the last part of it together."

When I gets up to my office I is greeted by Miss Holliday, and makes my absence a excuse

to grab a kiss off of her. This done, she blushes, says I is horrid, and then tells me they is a guy in my office from the Board of Health, waitin' for me.

"The Board of Health?" I repeats. "What does he want?"

My private secretary uses her powder puff.

"Search me," she says.

I goes into my private office and finds the stranger. He is a young guy, dresses like a ham actor outta work, and I smells one of my cigars in his mouth and on the air.

The minute he lies an eye on me, he pulls some trick papers outta his pocket and comin' over hands me one.

"Don't be hard on the little gal outside," he says.

"I had to use some bunk to get in."

I looks from the paper I holds to his face.

"What's this?"

He grins.

"Merely a subpoena in the action of 'Joseph Simpkins versus the Café Jazbo, for twenty-three dollars and costs.'"

*Oh, boy!*

"On what grounds is the case bein' brung?"  
I hollers.

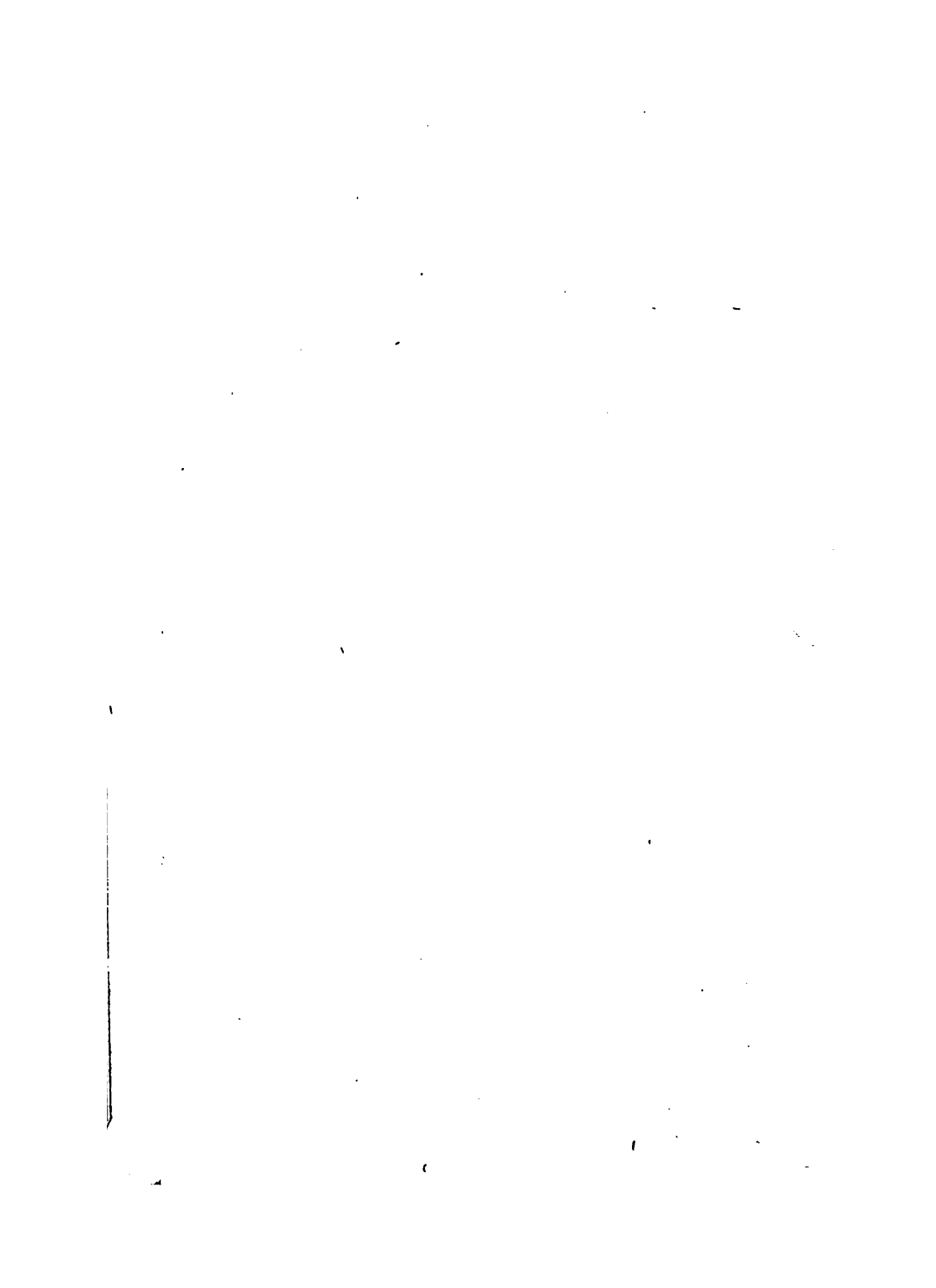
He laughs.

"The plaintiff claims he was robbed and poisoned. He says in his complaint money was took from him under false pretences, and that the quality of the food was such as to make him sick."

A coupla minutes later I is able to ring for my secretary, and when she appears and shows the process server out, I manages to get back my breath.

"Send Nick White to me," I requests, "and Miss Holliday; tell him for me I has got an endin' for Robin's newest fillum what is a whale — bein' it was wrote by my brother-in-law hisself!"





**REEL SIX**

***THE DAY OF THE DOG***

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

## REEL SIX

### *THE DAY OF THE DOG*

THEY had been a weddin' at the studio, Miss Holliday promisin' to love, honor and disobey no other than Ted Gavin, hisself! A blind man could have seen with half a eye they had been somethin' doin' around the studio, in the line of this here billin' and cooin' thing, but even so, no one, myself included, had expected a peach like my secretary to fall into Ted's lap the first time he shook the tree. However, women, race horses, the stock exchange, and the weather, is all distantly related. You can never tell what any of them is gonna do from one minute to the next.

The weddin' has set me back practically nothin' — three hundred dollars even. Two hundred bucks kissed me good-bye when I invested in a chest full of solid plated silverware, what I and Gracie together give the bride and her groom, so they wouldn't not starve to death, or have to eat with

their fingers after the flat was hired. The other hundred bills went towards the givin' of a little supper, served a coupla hours after the both of them had been officially made man and wife, and the minister, bein' only human, had grabbed a kiss off of the bride.

The feed is gáve in the studio, and among the guests present and willin' to graft a free meal is Norma Delightful, dolled to the minute; Nick, Carrie, Gracie, Steve, Mike Hanley, Pete, Robin, and a bunch of camera kids, crank-artists, supers, scene shifters, and fillum exchange men — also myself.

After they is nothin' left but empty bottles and clean dishes, Ted and his newly made bride beat it away in a taxi, whilst we all hurl rice and old shoes at them.

Then we all go home to sleep it off, but they is not much of the same to be had. Robin, on accounta feastin' on weddin' cake, has a pain in his stomach for every ticket in the subway, and all of the night long, I and Gracie listens to a concert gave by Child Edward. If the sleep the pair of of us enjoyed was measured, it wouldn't not have

been enough to make a pair of wristlets for a flea.

When we all assembles at breakfast the followin' mornin', we're all feelin' as cheerful as a ear-ache, and as snappy as a hound with a bone.

"I hope," I begins on Joe, who is bitin' the skin off of an orange, "you and Carrie ain't gonna make no charge for the serenade Robin gave us last night."

Joe leaves off toyin' with the orange, and sneers over at me.

"Whose money," he asks, "bought the weddin' cake what give Robin the jim-jams? Answer me that."

"Certainly," butts in Carrie, rushin' to his defence, "whose money if it wasn't not yourn? Do you think I and Joe like to be kept awake, any more than you and Gracie?"

The wife steps on my foot under the table.

"Listen," I says, "isn't there one single thing the child can eat without gettin' the collie wobbles, or the shimmeys cha wobbles, or whatever you call 'em?"

"No," replies Joe, "everythin' he eats goes to his stomach."

Gracie comes to life.

"The whole thing is," she says, pullin' down her boudoir cap, until one eye only can be seen, "is that you don't use no discretion, Carrie. You keep Robin away from candy like it was dynamite or somethin', and then let him make a glutton of hisself at a supper what ain't for children anyway!"

Carrie's eyes flash and she draws a quiverin' breath.

"Is that so?" she yelps. "Well, I'll have you un'erstan' right here and now, my son ain't no glutton nor nothin' of the kind! If they is any gluttons around here I know who it is."

"So do I!" I horns in quickly. "Do you want to take a guess who I mean, Joe?"

He ignores me, and Carrie is about to be heard some more, when the door of the dinin' room opens and in comes Robin, led by Miss Murphy. My nephew is rigged up in a sailor's suit. He wears one of these here middle blouses, a pair of white pants that will soon be dirty, and a hat with the words "New Mexico" wrote on the band. He is pale around the gills and sleepy lookin', but grins when he sees me, climbin' onto a chair by the window, wipin' his feet on it as he does so.

"How do you feel this mornin', Robin," I asks him, "after the exercises of last night?"

He tears his gaze away from the window and looks me over.

"I feel orl right now, Runcle Ed. When is we gonna go to the studio? Kin I have a tennis ball to play with? Kin I swim in the tank to-day? Runcle Ed, Norma says she is makin' me a teeny bathin' suit to wear in the tank."

"Oh, that reminds me," says Gracie.

She gets up outta her chair and blows out. When she comes in again, she is carryin' a little trick sweater which she has been knittin' in her spare time, which same is all the time.

"Robin! See what Aunt Gracie has made for you. Look it — a nice little sweater for a nice little boy!"

Carrie and Joe, gettin' a flash of it, and seein' it is a free present, and won't cost them nothin', forgets their grouch and begins takin' an interest in life again. Carrie digs up a smile what fits her face and takes the sweater over to Robin.

"Ain't it lovely, sweetheart?" she says, givin' it into his hands. "Pink is just your color — it



matches your complexion. Thank Aunt Gracie nice for makin' it for you."

Robin does this, and then feels in the pockets of the sweater to see if they is any money concealed there. Findin' none he begins goin' over it like a secondhand clothes man lookin' for a bargain.

"I seen a little teeny woolen dog with a sweater on just like this!" he says, finally.

I, Gracie and Carrie has to laugh, and even Joe snickers. Then I remembers suddenly I has promised to deliver Robin early to the studio, to Nick White who wants to begin shootin' his latest feature. I also remembers I has some applicants for the position of private secretary, made vacant by Miss Holliday, and lights a twenty-cent cigar, yelpin' to Roger, to get my limousine from the garage in a hurry. Whilst the bird is so doin', Miss Murphy buttons Robin into his overcoat, and sticks a pair of mittens on his hands.

"Come on, Robin," I hollers, "lets beat it down to the studio so you can get a chance to earn some of that salary I am payin' you!"

"Which I guess he don't, hey?" snarls Joe,





sniffin' at my cigar smoke hungrily. "I guess you got it pretty soft, settin' back in your private office with your feet on the desk, while my son is workin' like a wop slave to make you a millionaire!"

I slips into my own coat and laughs coldly.

"And I guess you has got it pretty soft," I answers, "grabbin' the best of everythin' without the cost of a nickle to you, and layin' around this flat so much, your name should be Hen instead of Joel. How about that?"

He has no answer in stock for this, and turns his back on me, goin' to the windows.

Then Gracie and Carrie has to kiss Robin six or eight times apiece, and my sister-in-law has to tell the child a lotta instructions about what he must do and what he mustn't not do, what nobody except a memory expert could remember. After this is over, I, Robin, and Miss Murphy beats it down to the studio as fast as the law allows.

The new fillum in which my nephew is due to make millions of people learn how to laugh, is the last thing Ted Gavin wrote before gettin' hooked up. The scenario of it reads better than a Liberty Bond, and the whole idea looks as good to Nick and me as

a chorus girl in tights. But they is a flaw in it. Beginnin' about the middle of reel the first, Gavin has introduced into the story the character of a dog on which a lot of the plot hinged, and on which a bunch of sure fire laughs depended. Neither I, nor Nick, has paid much attention to the dog bein' needed, when we went over the script together, but as I and Robin gets into the studio, the first thing I bunks into is my director layin' in wait for me.

"Ed," Nick says, drawin' me to one side, "on accounta Jerry not gettin' the permission for them locations at Lakewood, I is gonna shoot all the interiors first off. Such bein' the case I will want that there dog Ted wrote into the story, right away. Now, just what kind of a dog Ted meant we should use, I don't know. Ed, what do you know about dogs outside of the fact they wear collars and have fleas?"

"Not a thing," I answers. "But what is to keep us from sendin' Ted a telegram wire and learnin' just what it is we should have?"

Nick shakes his head.

"Umm," he says, "where is we gonna wire him

at? This honeymoon he went off on is a secret place, and for all we know it might be Atlantic City on the ocean, or Pine View on the bum."

I sees he is right and thinks hard.

"Then," I says, "we will have to tell our troubles to Steve. In addition to bein' a property man, Steve knows everythin' from why does a woman have the last word, to what kind of socks the men is wearin' in Hindustan. I has often thought it is Steve hisself what wrote the encyclopedia. Wait a second and I will have one of the boys fetch him ' up so as we can tell him what we is after."

I sends for Steve and he appears in no time at all, puttin' on his collar and buttonin' up his vest.

"Steve," Nick begins, "how much do you know about dogs?"

The property man registers deep thought and scratches his head.

"Dogs," he answers after a moment, "is domesticated carnivorous animals what belong to the genus Canis. They is everythin' from a Dog Star to a dog-watch, not to mention a dog-trot and dogwood; also a dog's life which is now bein' enjoyed by myself on accounta I is unable to find

a Japanese screen for Norma's boudoir set, what will please her."

"Well," says Nick, exchangein' a glance with me, "Gavin has wrote the part of a dog into this here new feature I wanna start work on, and as Ted is waitin' in some unknown place, for the honey to wear off of the moon, we don't know where he is at so as we can wire him. However, as Robin in one scene, is supposed to get rescued by the dog, I think Ted meant it should be a large animal."

Steve nods.

"Somethin' like a Sam Bernard, hey?" he says, scratchin' his head again. "Gimme a look at the continuity and I will try and dope out what is wanted. Then I'll beat it down to the pound. For fifty cents they will give me any dog whatsoever I want, and for a coupla bucks I can get enough mutts to keep a sausage foundry runnin' on high for a year!"

I gives him a copy of the script and he ducks with it, while Nick beats it away to see where Robin is at, and is he dressed yet. Then I recalls the advertisement I has stuck in the mornin' papers

for a new secretary, and goes upstairs to see if they is anyone waitin' for me.

They is!

The office what is located outside of my private room is jammed full of girls, women, and ladies, all settin' around and tellin' each other both their troubles and lies. I busts a way through them, and then raises a hand for silence. It didn't not have no more effect than if I had copped a spoonful of water outta the ocean.

"Listen!" I yells. "Excuse me for buttin' in on your conversations, but lets have a little of that quiet thing for a minute!"

From the tone of my voice the bunch gets wise to the fact I is neither the janitor or the watchman of the building, and the chatter quits to nothin'.

"That's better!" I goes on to say. "Now then, all you people, I suppose, is here after my job. Such bein' the case, let the one who got here first stand up to their feet."

At this everybody in the room ets up and crowds forward. Seein' they is nothin to do, I grabs the one nearest to me, opens tl : door, pulls her



into my private office, and then shuts and bolts the door to the angry mob without.

The one I has picked outta the prize package, flops into a chair and I sets down to take a look at her.

What I sees is a gal whose age might be either twenty-two or fifty-three. She is as blonde as soft-boiled eggs; has more powder on than was used at the Marne, and is wearin' a blue silk dress what looks like they isn't enough material made of it to finish it out. It reaches to just below the knees, and from where the skirt leaves off, to the ground, they is black silk stockin's what has white butterflys flyin' all over them. She also has got on patent leather shoes with buckles full of phony diamonds.

For the rest she owns a pair of blue eyes, a baby stare, and a pout.

"You can tell me your name if you want to," I says, after givin' her the twice across and the once over. "Anythin' you say will be treated as bein' strictly confidential between us."

At this she giggles.

"I haven't nothin' to be ashamed of," she tells

me, in a voice what matched her hair. "My name is Myrtle Manning. I live at home with my father and mother. I have just now arrived at the age of twenty."

I is gonna ask what detained her, but instead I nods while she grabs some air, and begins tellin' the story of her young life. She recites a list of all the places she has worked at, and goes on to explain how clever she is, and what a bear she has turned out to be on the typewriter. Accordin' to her she admits she is smarter than Cleopatra, knows more about stenography than Rockefeller does about oil, and tells me she is the very person I has been lookin' for, although maybe I didn't know it before.

After I gets through listenin' to her, I makes up my mind her salary can't not be told from the national debt of Siam and I asks her what insult she will work before. She thinks it over and wants to know does I think fifteen dollars per the each week is too much?

"No," I says, "that is about right to commence with, but answer me one question. Has you any desire to uplift the screen with your presence, and

do you admit Mary Pickford is better'n you or not?"

She takes a thumb outta her mouth and turns the baby stare full on me.

"Oh, goodness," she hollers, "before I would pose before the camera I would chop up tickets in the subway! Believe me, movie actin' is a lotta bunk and nobody could jam me into it neither by hooks nor by crook! I has a sister, Mae by name, what ran away to Hollywood, California, to go into the fillums, and all she does is set around the lot and once in awhile let herself get runned over by an auto or somethin'. Honest, the salary she drags down wouldn't keep me in hairpins! I don't wanna be insultin', but I *hate* the movies!"

"Then consider yourself engaged!" I says. "Take off your hat and hang it up, while I disperse the angry mob without."

With the assistance of a coupla scene shifters I manages to clear out the outside room with hardly no trouble. One or two of the job seekers tries to make a row, claimin' they should have the job, and another, a gal with a stormy face, yells out

loud that she is a cracker-jack actress, and that I is losin' money by not immediately signin' her.

When the last of the crowd finally takes the air, I shows Myrtle the location of the Remingwood, points out to her the place she can stick her chewin' gum when her jaws ache, and introduces her to the spot where the office clock hangs, so she will know where it is at without strainin' her neck.

This off of my mind, I beats it down to the studio which is goin' full blast, with the Cooper-Hewitts workin' overtime, and where Robin in a ragged suit of clothes, is tumblin' around like he was insane, or crazy, for the benefit of the camera what is eatin' it all up.

A coupla days slip past, and then one mornin' when I and my little nephew gets down to the studio, we runs into more confusion and noise in four minutes than they was in Europe for four years. No sooner we gets inside of the place we hears a shoutin' and a roarin' noise what can't not be told from that in the Stock Exchange durin' a bull market. They is a crowd hangin' around, all lookin' at somethin' and laughin' their heads off, and before I can horn in and get an eyeful,

the mob busts apart and outta it comes gallopin' somethin' what for a moment looks to me to be a cross between a wild lion and a mad elephant. I didn't not get a very good look at it for the reason the animal sticks its front feet on top of my chest, trips me up and introduces the back of my head to the top of the floor.

When I again takes an interest in what is goin' on, Nick White is treatin' me to a swallow of what is in the leather covered flask he carries around for emergencies with him. I stands up and sees Norma holdin' on to the collar of what done the damage, whilst Robin is runnin' around the dog, shriekin' with joy.

"You orter seen Runcle Ed fall down!" he gasps. "You orter seen my Runcle fall on his head!" he hollers to Pete, our animal man what just come in.

Norma looks at me and laughs, like fallin' on my head was a joke.

"Isn't Phillip playful?" she inquires, layin' her face against the coat of the dog. "Isn't he a card, Ed?"

I rubs the back of my head, on which they is

growin' something what feels like the Rocky Mountains.

"He is very playful," I admits, "just like the Bolsheviki is! But why do you call him Phillip? Why don't you call him John or Andrew or Herbert?"

Norma pulls a haughty smile.

"It ain't hard to see you don't know this here dog, Ed," she says. "We call him Phillip on accounta his appetite — he is always eatin' — always fillin' up! The way this here dog can eat would surprise you, Ed. When Steve brung him in last night, after you has gone, the first thing he did was to eat up a back drop all by hisself. Then he must have thought the legs of the chairs in the boudoir set was bones, because he ripped them all off and ate them up!"

Whilst Nick is talkin' to a camera man, Robin is admirin' Phillip from all sides, touchin' him every now and then, like he doubted if the dog was real.

"Runcle Ed," he says presently, "this ain't a dog, this is a pony. Runcle Ed, look it all his teeth! Runcle Ed, would Phillip bite you in the leg?"

He keeps on askin' fool questions, while I and Phillip looks each other coldly in the eyes.

"Well, what do you think of the mutt, boss?" Steve says, comin' over to me. "Ain't he a beauty? All he cost the company was a mere fifty cents."

I tears my gaze away from Phillip.

"Did they tell you what kind of a breed he is?" I asks. "Or do you have to pay extra to find that out?"

Steve finds the dogs coat interestin' and begins runnin' his hands through it.

"The bird up in the pound says that Phillip is a full bred Mongolian Boar Hound," he chirps. "I don't know whether to believe him or not."

"I do!" I barks. "You should have seen the way he bore down on me!"

Steve grins.

"Don't hold that against him, boss," he begs. "It only goes to show you he don't take to strangers. He's a swell watchdog."

I has to laugh.

"Yeah? I thought he was Big Ben hissself on accounta the way he alarmed me!"

Nick, who is impatient to begin workin', hollers

for both Norma, Robin, and the dog, and they beat it away, my little nephew hangin' onto the tail of Phillip. The last thing I sees before duckin' away, is Pete the animal man tryin' to learn Phillip how to sit up and beg.

Upstairs I finds the outer office deserted, and castin' my eye on the clock notices the hour is practically ten. Then I thinks of Myrtle, my new secretary, and decides she hates the movie pictures so much she is not gonna work even where they is made.

Just as the thought is runnin' through my head I hears footsteps comin' up the stone stairway, and in gallops Myrtle, pantin' like an engine at a three alarm fire.

"Oh, mercy!" she screams, takin' off her hat, glancin' at the clock, powderin' her nose, and smilin' at me all at one and the same time. "Is it really ten o'clock? I think I must be late!"

I smiles.

"You only think it," I answers, "but I *know* it! What was the trouble — a block in the subway?"

She shakes her head and openin' a beaded bag, drags outta nail file and a orange stick.



"I think I overslept," she says, performin' with the file. "But it won't happen again. And I know," she goes on, stoppin' only to smile, "you will forgive me! You look so good and kind. Why, I says to mother last night when I got home, I says, 'Ma, you should ought to see the gentleman I is workin' for. He's the best lookin' man you would wanna see anywhere. And he has a heart as big as Brooklyn itself. I think we is gonna get along better'n salt and pepper!'"

I gives her a chilly glance and laughs again, removin' the nail file and orange stick from her hand, and slippin' in place of them a pencil.

"Listen," I says, "keep that stuff for the bird what wears out the sofa in your livin' room! We'll get along all right if you remember this is a movie picture studio, and not no hotel in which you is employed as night clerk! Tie that and let us get busy."

Instead of gettin' the point, Myrtle begins singin' under her breath, and tryin' to grab a flash of herself in the mirror over the wash sink.

On my desk is more mail than I ever seen before, layin' as thick as dust on it. I waves my new

assistant into a chair, and tackles the correspondence. The first thing I gets a flash at is a picture photograph post card from Ted Gavin, which reads "Dear Ed, On the level they is more water up here than they was in the studio last winter, when the pipes went bad." The card is postmarked Niagara Falls, and shows a place called Goat Island which hasn't not got a single goat on it. They is another post card layin' long side of it, and this proves to be from Miss Holliday — or Mrs. Gavin to give her her new name. This card shows the Falls in operation and reads on the front side of it, "Greetings from two happy honeymooners!"

I lays both cards down and sighs, thinkin' of how I and Gracie never had no time to duck away on one of these honeymoon things.

Nick, to whom work is nothin' more nor is it less than play, has soon got the most of the scenes shot for the first reel of the fillum Child Edward is in. We has decided to call it "*A Dog's Life*," on accounta Phillip tormentin' Norma, who plays Robin's mother, to death. She can't get rid of the dog no matter how hard she tries, but they is a good twist to it when Robin falls into a lake, and

the dog drags him out, and thus saves his life. After that Phillip is aces high with Norma.

At the first showin' of what Nick has made, in the projectin' room, I laughs so hard I shakes all the change outta my pockets, and has to beg Nick to tell the operator to lay off, so I can get some air into my lungs. The thing is a whale and even though the scenes ain't cut and arranged, it has the crowd what is watchin' it in hysterics. Nick don't mind admittin' it is the best thing he has ever done, but he gives credit to old Pete for the way he has trained the dog. Accordin' to Nick our Mongolian Boar Hound un'erstan's Pete better'n a boss plumber does pipes, and the only thing the dog won't do for him is to lend him money.

Meanwhile Phillip has got hisself in soft with everyone around the studio except I. Norma thinks more of the dog than she does of her pay envelope, and as for Robin, my little nephew is wild about the animal, and thinks more of him than he does of his old man — not that I blame him for doin' the same. Pete has got so he is considerin' the idea of takin' Phillip onto the vaudeville stage, where he is to be known as The Mind Reading

Canine, and as for the rest of the gang, all they do is feed Phillip every five minutes. Instead of makin' the dog sick, the fact he is gettin' stuffed up with food, only sharpens his appetite. I never seen anythin' like it. The only thing the animal passes up is wire. Everythin' else around the building has his tooth marks all over it.

One mornin', a day or two after Nick, Norma, Robin, and the gang has gone down to Lakewood to shoot the lake scenes in the script, my brother-in-law totters into the dinin' room where I is makin' a world's record for quick eatin', his face as white as a washwoman's thumb.

"Ed," he moans, "I has just now received a letter from the manager of my furniture factory out in Great City. He says the business is goin' all to pieces, on accounta me not bein' there to keep an eye on things."

I spears a piece of bacon and chuckles.

"You can't blame me for that." I answers him. "I never tried to keep you in this town against your will!"

He sinks down into a chair, and I begins to un'erstan' how bad the news is when he neglects what is

layin' on the table in the way of coffee, eggs, bacon, and the like.

"I must keep this secret from Carrie," he whispers. "If she finds out about this I will get a awful pannin'. I guess the only thing left for me to do, is to grab a train for Great City and get there as fast as I can. This here tangle has got to be straightened out."

I nods.

"Them," I says, "are the first words what has any kind of sense to them, what I has heard you speak, since I begun to support you!"

He pays no attention to this, gets up, and starts prowlin' around the room, his face as blank as new writin' paper.

"I will get Roger to pack a grip for me," he goes on to say, "and I will tell Carrie some lies by informin' her I got to get back home to attend a board of directors meetin'. I believe a train leaves at eleven five."

"Your belief is right!" I yelps. "I know the trains to Michigan better'n I do the alphabet. Joe," I continues, "I would certainly hate to see your business go bad on you. I wanna give you

some free advice. This here is it. Get to Great City as soon as you're able, stay there as long as possible, and don't worry none at all about us here. We're sure gonna miss you, Joe. But we mus'n't not let this stop you goin' to where your duty lies at. Go west, Joe. Build up your business, and remember absence makes the hearts grow fonder!"

He gives me a look to see if I'm kiddin'. But I never cracks a smile and he is satisfied.

"This is a terrible blow to me," he moans. "Here I am beatin' it away without grabbin' a kiss off of my wife, and without layin' an eye on my only son before I go. Perhaps," he says, brightenin' up, "I had better wait until next week. How do I know this news ain't a false alarm?"

All the hopes within me begins dwindle away to nothin'.

"Oh, all right," I says, makin' out it ain't nothin' to me, "stay if you wanna, but don't pick on me if your business goes to rack and to ruin, on accounta you wantin' to get a kiss off your child. Before I would do a thing like that I would jump into the river and say, 'Here goes nothin' in particular!'"

He does a marathon around the dinin' table,

until I gets dizzy watchin' him. Then he stops beside me and sticks out his fin so as I can shake it.

"Thanks for the advice Ed. I'll go on the eleven five! Has you got a suit case I can borrow off you?"

Rather than give him an excuse to linger I would have gave him the shirt off my back. I rings for Roger and when the valet creeps in, I waves at Joe with one hand.

"Roger," I barks, "Mr. Simpkins is goin' away from here! He is leavin' for no less than Michigan, and he wants somethin' he can hide his tooth brush and a clean collar in. Dig up one of my bags and give it to him, but make sure first they is nothin' inside of it. Then call up the garage and have them jump a taxi down here what can make the eleven five. Tell the bird up at the garage to charge the cab to my account."

Joe, hearin' of all the favors I is doin' for him, begins smilin' all over his face. He thinks about as much of gettin' somethin' for nothin' as McGraw does of the Giants.

"Good-bye, Ed," he says in a chokin' voice. "Much obliged for all the favors you is doin' me. They is just one thing more I wanna ask —"

I cuts him short by producin' my wallet.

"How much?"

He shakes his head.

"It ain't money," he says. "I want you should keep an eye on Carrie. I trust her, but you know how it is with these swell-lookin' dames, and this city is full of flirts and —"

I busts out laughin' in his face.

"Joe," I says, "I give you my word your wife will be as safe here as if she was locked up in the sub-treasury! I will personally be responsible she don't not elope with Tony the iceman, or flirt with the cop on the corner!"

He totters away, followed by Roger, and I feels so good that I raises the wages of the maid servant what blows in to remove the dishes, causin' her to almost faint with the shock.

Then I sneaks into Gracie's room, where friend wife is toyin' with a jar of 'cold cream and a electric curlin' iron. I whispers the good news and while at first she don't believe me, after a while she sees I is on the level, and busts two cigars I has concealed inside of my vest, huggin' me.

With Joe gone the flat don't not seem the same,



everythin' bein' quiet, with practically no battles at meal hours to speak of, at all. Of course, now and then, just to keep herself in trim Carrie has to snap at me, but for the most part things run as smooth as cream.

Nick, Norma, Robin, and the gang comes back from Lakewood, with Nick reportin' the water scenes he has took, to be knock-outs. My little nephew misses his old man as much as a millionaire misses a nickle, and not havin' Joe around to stick in his oar, Carrie begins to learn the boy some manners he didn't not never have nor know of before.

"Ed," says Nick, comin' into my private office late one mornin', a week after Joe has gone, "now we is finished with the services of Phillip, I wish you would please give the mutt the gate. He is gummin' up all my interiors and I can't do a thing with Robin when he is around."

I lays off dictatin' letters to Myrtle and looks at him.

"Why don't you tell Steve to take the dog back to the pound where he come from? If you is finished up with him, get rid of him. He is a

nuisance anyway, chewin' up everythin' in sight. And the bill what Pete handed in last week for the meat he bought the dog would be enough to keep me in clothes for a year!"

Nick looks at Myrtle's silk stockin's like he had never seen them before, and begins to laugh.

"That is all right to say, get rid of the dog," he chirps, "but try and remove Phillip from amongst us and see where you get off at."

He says the words in such a funny voice that I gets suspicious.

"What do you mean?"

He tears his gaze away from the hosiery of Myrtle and walks to the door.

"Come on downstairs for about two minutes and see for yourself!"

I tells my secretary to call me if the telephone rings, and goes out with Nick. In the studio they has erected the boudoir set for Norma, and over by the window, in one corner, I gets a glimpse of her with Robin settin' on her lap. The pair of them is watchin' Phillip drinkin' milk outta a pan.

"Phillip ain't a dog, Runcle Ed!" my nephew hollers, once he sees me. "Phillip is a cat! Look

at the way he's drinkin' up milk with his tongue! Runcle Ed, he is jus' like a weeny kitten! Why does dogs drink up milk, Runcle Ed?"

Phillip gets a flash of me outta the corner of his eye, and begins shiverin' all over.

"Listen, Robin," I says; "this stuff is all very nice to indulge in, after business hours. However, they is no mention made, in the contract I and your old man has, about you sittin' around to watch Phillip lap up milk when you should ought to be workin'. Such bein' the case the best thing for you is to get off of Norma's lap, and get busy in front of the camera! Anyway," I continues, "Phillip is gonna go away from here so the best thing you can do is say good-bye to him and get into action."

Child Edward slides from off Norma's lap, and grabs ahold of the ears of the dog, while Norma looks at me from head to feet.

"Can it be possible," she wants to know, "you is gonna be so heartless as to send the dog away?"

"Yeah!" I answers. "Not only is it possible but it is probable!" I looks about and sees Steve strugglin' with two imitation oil paintin's. I

whistles for him and when he comes over, I gets right down to facts. "Steve," I says, "get a string or a rope and lead Phillip back to where he come from. He is makin' a bum outta my business, and the sooner he gets away from here so much the better for all concerned."

My property man wipes his hands on his pants and drags out a sigh.

"Aw, have a heart, boss!" he pleads. "Don't can the mutt — he is a good dog, if I do say so myself and — "

"If the hound has made such a hit with you," I snarls, gettin' both mad and red in the face, "that you can't not bear to part with him, take him home and keep him. I make you a free present of him!"

Steve shifts from one foot to the other foot.

"I would do just that," he says, "only my wife hates dogs worse than she does the janitor! She is scared of them too, and she wouldn't not put her hand on one for love nor for money!"

I turns to Norma.

"Here is a chance for you, Miss Delightful," I says, "to get a grand dog for nothin'. Since you

has got a tender heart, and since Phillip looks as good to you as a royal flush does to me, consider the dog yours. You can have an hour off to take him home. I will even pay for a taxi to get him there. How's that?"

My star looks away, and wipes her eyes like it was all so sad it brung tears into her eyes.

"It is plain to see, Ed," she informs me, "that you don't know nothin' about the telephone booth I live in, and which same is called a flat. If I took Phillip there they wouldn't not be enough room for me to get in. It would be cruel to coop him up, too."

With that I turns to Nick but he backs away.

"Don't look at me, Ed!" he begs. "I never said *I* liked the dog —"

"How about Pete?" I wants to know. "I thought he was due to make a vaudeville actor outta Phillip."

"Oh, Pete would take him in a minute," Steve butts in, "only his little daughter has got a canary bird and two cats and —"

I feels my temper leavin'.

"Well, listen," I shouts, "I have got neither the

time nor the disposition to stand around here and chew the rag about this here mongrel! This place is a movie picture company and not no dog kennel! Put a rope about that hound's collar and get him outta here before I get *mad!*"

Steve swallows, but seein' they is nothin' to do but follow out the orders, he takes a yard of rope from his pocket and slips it through the collar on the dog. He begins draggin' Phillip away, but hardly does he get three feet, before Robin lets out a yell what can be heard in California. Then before any of us can lay a hand on him, Robin rushes up to Steve and grabs tight ahoid of the rope.

"You leave my dog alone!" he howls, kickin' at the ankles of the property man. "You leave my pony dog alone! Runcle Ed make him leave Phillip go!"

He keeps on tuggin' at the rope, whilst Nick and Norma laughs together, and I goes over and lies a hand on his shoulder.

"Robin," I says, "if you don't not wanna get fanned, leave go of this rope!" I tries to pry him away, but the more I pulls the harder he holds on,

screamin' and yellin' like I was murderin' him, so that everyone in the building comes rushin' in to see what is the matter.

For fifteen minutes I pleads with the kid, offerin' him everythin' from money to candy to leave go of the rope, but they is nothin' doin'. He sticks closer to the hound than a one-armed beggar lookin' for carfare, and even a box of candy what I sends Steve dashin' out for, don't make no hit with him whatsoever. It might have just as well been castor oil for all the enthusiasm he shows.

"I don't want it!" he shrieks over and over. "I don't want nothin' oney Phillip! If I can't have Phillip I don't want nothin'!"

Tears is splashin' all over the front of his suit, and he throws hisself down on the floor presently, hidin' the rope under him.

All this time Nick keeps lookin' at his watch, and glancin' at the scenario he has in his hand, sayin' things under his breath.

I knows my nephew's temper better'n I do the amount of my income tax, and I realizes he will hang onto the rope until they is ice skatin' in Hades. Such bein' the case, and as time is valuable, I begins

to see I is beaten from all points and might as well lay down, which same I will have to do sooner or later, anyway.

"Robin," I says, tryin' to crack a smile, "on accounta me bein' your uncle I will do somethin' I has no right to do — I will give in to you! Not only this but I will make you a present of Phillip if you will only let go of that there rope and start workin'!"

The child is waitin' for just this, and he drops the cord like it was full of thorns, leaves off yellin', and wipes both his nose and eyes on the sleeve of his jacket.

"Thank you, Runcle Ed," he says, smilin' all over his face. "Kin I have a piece of candy now, before I starts bein' a movie picture actor again?"

I presents him with a handful of chocolates. He jams them in his pocket, and takin' Phillip, ties him to an iron girder, where he can keep his eye on him. Then he is ready to work.

"Some kid!" says Steve, grinnin'. "He has got sense all right!"

For the rest of the mornin' and early afternoon,



I am as busy as a bird bailin' a leaky row boat in the middle of the ocean. I wears out three of Myrtle's pencils and dictates her dizzy. Next I has to dash down town to see the first showin' of one of Robin's feature fillums. After this I has a conference with some exchange men for four o'clock. I sees I am due to be delayed, so I telephones the studio and tells Miss Murphy to take Robin home in the limousine when Nick is finished with him, and not to wait for me.

It is after six o'clock when I finally gets through and breezes up to Riverside Drive and to the flat. Here Roger opens the door for me, and I sees he looks like he is excited about somethin'. Before I can ask him what is the trouble, the door of the livin' room busts open and out springs Gracie.

"Ed," she yells, "what kind of a dirty deal is this you is tryin' to put across? What has I ever done to you that you should take such a revenge on me?"

"Why, Gracie," I says, handin' Roger my hat and coat, "what is the matter with you? You look all upset!"

"Upset!" she bawls. "It's a wonder I am not a

ravin' maniac! What do you mean by givin' Robin a present like *that*?"

I suddenly hears the sound of barkin', and realizin' what she means, I leans up against the wall, wettin' my lips.

"Who let that mongrel in here?" I hollers. "Somebody is gonna pay dear for this, believe me!"

Gracie laughs hysterically.

"You bet somebody is gonna pay dear!" she raves. "And *you* is the one! Already the superintendent of this here flat house has 'phoned to the landlord, and he is ready to hand you a dispossess. Not only this but six people in the buildin' has already notified the Board of Health that Phillip, or whatever his name is, is here! And two of the coon hall boys has quit the job cold, bein' scared to death of the dog and thinkin' he is a lion or somethin'!"

I pulls myself together, and creeps into the livin' room, where Child Edward is havin' the time of his life rollin' around the floor with the dog on top of him.

"Where is Carrie at?" I asks. "Why ain't she here to take care of her child?"

Gracie flops into a chair and begins fannin' herself with one hand, and holdin' smellin' salts to her nose with the other.

"Carrie!" she sneers. "Don't mention her name to me! The minute she caught sight of the dog, she beat it into her bedroom and locked and bolted the door."

Miss Murphy sticks in her face at this moment, and turns pale when she sees me.

"I—I didn't know I was doin' wrong to let Robin bring the dog home," she stammers. "He says you gave him the dog for hisself, and Steve and Miss Delightful both backs him up. What could I do when you wasn't around to tell me?"

I don't pay no attention to her, but goes to Robin who sits up and grins at me.

"Look it Phillip roll, Runcle Ed!" he says. "Ain't he a cute dog? Runcle Ed, kin he sit beside me when I eats my supper? Runcle Ed, kin he sleep in my room to-night?"

Well, for about thirty minutes I talks harder to the child than a guy pleadin' Socialism, but it didn't not have no more result than if I was teachin' a

deaf and dumb mute how to sing. At the end of the half of an hour, Robin, if anythin' is worse than he was in the mornin', at the studio. The whole thing is he absolutely refuses to leave the dog go, and they is nothin' to it but to let Roger take him and tie him up in the kitchen where the cook, after gettin' a peek at him, gives Gracie notice that when the dinner is made she is leavin'.

When the hound is tied up to the leg of the wash-tubs, Carrie is enticed outta her room and she begins to slam it into Robin at a great rate. But for all the good it done she might as well have saved her breath, because so far as my nephew is concerned, she might have been talkin' to him in Chinese. She sends Robin to bed without givin' him no supper, but he don't care, knowin' he has got the best of it, and that Phillip is safe. He goes into his bedroom and we hears him movin' his bed near to the door, where he can listen to hear if anyone is removin' the dog durin' the night.

I, Gracie, and Carrie has a conference of war after the dinner is through, and friend wife decides

either the dog goes or she goes. Then Carrie begins roastin' me for presentin' Robin with the animal, blamin' it all on me, and windin' up by sayin' that contract or no contract, she will take Robin and join Joe out in Great City.

All night long I lays awake tryin' to grab off an angle and get the right dope on the situation. Towards the mornin' I falls into a light doze, but is waked up almost immediately by Gracie screamin' in my ear. She is yellin' that burglars has busted into the flat, and when I gets up and shoots on the lights I sees the burglars is only Phillip, what has chewed the rope that tied him, in half. He is settin' on the end of the bed waggin' his tail, and it takes I and Roger twenty minutes more or less, to get the hound back into the kitchen, and find some clothes line with which we ties him up again.

"May I suggest, sir," my valet says, when the job is done, "that you rid yourself of this animal? If not, I fear I will have to seek another situation where my sleep is not disturbed."

The next mornin', to make things more pleasant, they is a telegram from Joe beside my plate, when

I comes in for breakfast, which says he is leavin' Great City, and that everythin' is all straightened out O.K. While I is settin' and digestin' this, the real estate agent of the buildin' comes in and says I am breakin' my lease, keepin' dogs, and that I has twenty-four hours to lose the animal. I tells the man that for my part I would do the same in twenty-four seconds, and after explainin' how things is, I provides him with a coupla my best cigars, and promises what he asks shall be done.

Finally, when the time comes to start out for the studio, Child Edward is still suspicious, and they is nothin' to do but to let Phillip come down with us and play around in the lot where the child can see him frequently, and know he is safe.

They is a bunch of kiddin' goin' around the buildin', on accounta my nephew gettin' away with the dog, and I finds out for the first time what a bunch of comedians I has workin' for me. Nick wants to know did Phillip sleep with me; Norma inquires did he eat up the parlor furniture, and even Myrtle leaves off powderin' her nose long enough to ask me does I love animals? Then Steve comes

up and begins recitin' a list of things I shouldn't not feed the dog on accounta them givin' him indigestion, and also Pete has somethin' to say, him advisin' me that dogs in flats is unhealthy, there bein' germs in the coat of the animal and so forth.

To all the humorists I have nothin' whatsoever to say, as I have decided upon a plan, and if it will only work, on the to-morrow I will give the whole gang of them the grand laugh.

I tries to forget my troubles by plungin' into work, and I is cheered up a lot by receivin' a letter from Ted Gavin. Ted has to say that he is through with the honeymoon thing, and is on his way back home. He also says he and his newly made bride will be in the city by five o'clock, and that the pair of them will come to the flat, after dinner, to see I and Gracie.

When quittin' time finally come, and we is all set to go home, I dashes out to where my limousine is waitin', and gettin' ahold of the chauffeur, I draws him to one side and slips into his hands a brand new five-dollar bill.

"Listen," I says to him, keepin' an eye out

for Robin and Miss Murphy, "I am gonna fix it up so this here mutt, what is makin' life as tough for me as a restaurant steak, is gonna sit on the front seat with you. On the way home, when we hits Riverside Drive, and it is good and dark, it will be your job to gently shove Phillip overboard. I don't want you should hurt the hound or anythin', only *lose him!* Once you do the same, drive like the devil for the flat and don't let nothin', outside the law, stop you. Do you get me?"

The chauffeur gives a good home to the five-case note and salutes me.

"Yes, sir," he answers. "Just leave it to me. I never did like the looks of that Phillip, anyway. He has got a bad eye."

"And a worse appetite!" I butts in. "If you can get away with this here stunt without lettin' my little nephew know his pet is ditched, I will sic onto you the twin brother of that bank note you just made disappear."

"It's mine already!" he hollers.

Hardly does he get the words from out his mouth, when Miss Murphy, Child Edward, and Phillip appears on the scene, the dog friskin' along



with his mouth wide open, as playful as a baby cow.

"Robin," I says, whilst Miss Murphy gets into the car, "they is no room for Phillip in the back of the machine. The dog will have to ride out in the front, next to the chauffeur."

I expects a howl at this, but the child only nods his head.

"Orl right, Runcle Ed," he says, "the nice fresh air will do Phillip good. It will make him wanna eat a whole lot!"

I has to laugh at his innocence.

"He don't need no fresh air for that," I answers.

I and the chauffeur boosts the hound into the front seat, then I goes around to the back of the car, enters into it, and we drives away.

They is nothin' to it. My plan works better'n if Nick hisself was directin' it. When we hits Riverside Drive it is as dark as the inside of a pocket. We rushes along it until we gets halfway home. Then the car slows down a little, and havin' done the same, leaps away like Barney Oldfield was at the wheel. Robin is settin' with his back to the chauffeur, and is tearin' off a fairy tale what

Norma told him. By lookin' over his shoulder I sees the chauffeur is alone, and that Phillip is no longer one of us.

Half the job done, I begins to steel myself for the worst part of it — the part when Robin finds out his little playmate is listed as 'Missin'. I know they is gonna be a horrible scene in front of the flat house, and no doubt I will get pinched for cruelty to children or somethin', but I un'erstan's it is better to have the thing over with at once, as the dentist says before drawin' a tooth outta your face and a bill outta your pocket.

I is speculatin' on the use of chloroform, and wonderin' is it really dangerous, when we reaches the house and dips in at the curb. Just ahead of us is a taxi, and from out it gets no less than brother-in-law Joe hisself, my bag in one hand. Robin gets a flash of his old man and forgets all about the fact they ever was a dog settin' in the front seat. After all I has suffered from my imagination workin' overtime, I almost falls on Joe's neck, and wrings his hand so hard, he hollers for me to lay off.

Upstairs they is a grand reunion between Joe

and Carrie, and friend wife, seein' the curse is removed off of the household, ruins some more of my cigars. It is when Robin is kissed all around and led off by Miss Murphy to bed, that he gets wise to the fact his dog is not lurkin' around nowhere.

"Runcle Ed," he says, "the chauffeur musta took good ole Phillip back to the studio, because he ain't nowhere around here. Runcle Ed, will you please go to the studio and feed Phillip? And will you take a little pillow for him to lay on top of?"

I promises I will do these things, and he breezes out. Carrie, at once, begins tellin' Joe the awful time we has had with the dog, and she roasts me some more, informin' him it was I what presented Robin with the hound.

Then Joe has to have somethin' to say.

"Ain't you got no better sense than to give Robin such a animal?" he snarls. "Suppose he had of got bit? What then, hey?"

I'm just about to come back at him with a remark that will make what hair he's got, curl, when the doorbell rings. Carrie tells us to cut out

---

snappin' at one another, as maybe it is them new people what has just moved in across the hall.

But it ain't no new people!

The door opens and in comes the Miss Holliday that was, and the Mrs. Gavin that is. She looks as good as Frisco to a homesick bird from California, and is featurin' a smile and a bunch of violets.

"Ed," she says, shakin' hands with me, kissin' Gracie, Carrie, and noddin' to Joe, all at the one and the same time, "Ted will be right up. He is detained downstairs for a minute."

She slips outta her coat, whilst the wife and Carrie begins askin' her how is married life, is there still a lotta water in the Falls, where are they gonna live at, what kind of clothes is bein' worn in Buffalo, and so forth, when they comes another ring at the bell.

I hears Roger let out a yell. Then the next thing I sees is Ted Gavin comin' into the room. But he ain't alone.

*Beside him, his mouth wide open, trots Phillip!*

"Hey, boss," Ted yells, whilst Carrie and Gracie looks at each other dumbly, "just take a look at

this dog what I found runnin' wild and loose around the Drive! Some dog, hey? The minute I got a flash of him, I knew he was the very mutt I had in mind when I wrote that last scenario for Robin. Got any meat, Ed? The poor hound seems hungry."



**THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT**

**This book is under no circumstances to be  
taken from the Building**

[illegible]





